



JOHN BAPTIST DE B\*\*\*,

Marquis d\*\*\*,

*Born the 24 of June 1704.*

*R. Parr Sculp*



# JEWISH LETTERS:

OR, A

## CORRESPONDENCE

Philosophical, Historical *and* Critical,

BETWIXT A

JEW and his CORRESPONDENTS,  
In different PARTS.

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TOME I.

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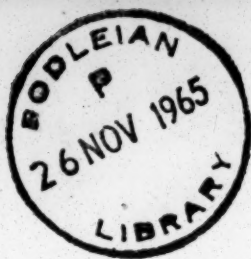


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MDCCXXXIX.





# DEDICATION

BY THE

FRENCH TRANSLATOR,

T O

Mr. *JAMES*, the Bookseller's Boy.



Understand, Master *JAMES*, that you are mighty exact in distributing the Letters which I send your Master twice a Week: Allow me to return you Thanks, and to express my Gratitude in this Epistle Dedicatory. You receive an Honour render'd to the greatest Heroes, but which has also been bestowed on the greatest Scoundrels; to the former for their Merit, and to the latter for their Riches. You, Master *JAMES*, are neither a *Cæsar*, nor a *Cresus*; you love to sleep in a whole Skin; and twelve Pence a Week,

## DEDICATION.

as your Master assures me, is the Sum Total of your Revenue, and therefore I presume that none will imagine I flatter your Vanity, to share in your Wealth; yet

*I love the Man who toils for daily Food,  
But hate the Wretch who sucks his Country's  
Blood.*

For which Reason I pass by the high station'd Rogue, to do Homage to honest, simple JAMES; though I must own that, from the Resemblance of the Statesman's Character with the modern *Israelites*, such a Man might be thought a qualified Patron to JEWISH LETTERS; but what's done is done, and I am Mr. JAMES's

*Most Humble and most Obedient Servant,*

The Translator.



PREFACE





# P R E F A C E

BY THE

## French Translator.



*WHEN I undertook a Translation of the JEWISH LETTERS, I was so sensible of some Inconveniencies which attended the publishing of them, that nothing less than the Sollicitations, and even the Reproaches of my Friends for depriving the ingenious and polite Part of Mankind of an useful and agreeable Entertainment, could have prevailed on me to part with the Manuscript. The Malice of Monks and Friars struck me with Terror, but the same Friends removed my Fears, and, at last, convinced me that, as these Letters treated Sovereigns with the Respect due to their sacred Persons and Characters, and contain'd nothing but Maxims tending to the Good and Benefit of civil Society, the judicious Readers wou'd not allow themselves to be prepossess'd or influenc'd by the Clamours of Bigots and Ignorants, who vainly imagine, that to unmask Vice and Hypocrisy is to insult Heaven: Nevertheless, what I dreaded is come to pass; among a certain Set of Men I'm look'd upon as one unworthy his Principles, and they willingly*

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*and in  
would have made*

vj PREFACE by the French Translator.

*me accountable for my Author's Sentiments. But is it not highly extravagant to imagine, or to require, that a Few should approve of Maxims and Customs directly contrary to his Law and the Prejudices of Education? Have the Letters of the Turkish Spy given Offence? They are infinitely stronger than those which I have translated, and yet no Men of Sense have made the Frenchman answerable for the Musselman's Principles.*

*If the Approbation of Connoisseurs, or People of Taste, and the Success of this Performance do more than ballance the Trouble which certain reflecting Discourses may have given the Author, I have Ground to despise, or, at least, not to be affected either with the trifling Remarks of some Criticks, or the malicious Aspersions of certain Bigots. I have received congratulatory Letters from different Parts of Europe on the Accomplishments and Ingenuity of \* AARON MONCECA; and, lately, my Transcriber at the Hague has sent me the original Letter of my Lord \*\*\*\*\*, in which he gives his Friend in Holland a Character of the JEWISH LETTERS very much to my Honour. I know that the Approbation of a Protestant won't pass Muster with a zealous, hot-brain'd Roman-Catholick; and am sensible that many of them have taken Offence at some Freedoms and Jokes on the Ceremonies of the Church; but they ought to have observ'd that, in attacking the Outside, or, rather, the useless and frivolous Parts of Religion, what's essential and solid appears in its native Purity and Lustre: 'Tis not the making merry with the Roman Ritual that has provok'd the Hypocrites, but the Discovery of their Impositions, Villanies, and Cheats, which this Book, in its Progress, has, to their great Regret, and in spite of all their Efforts, effectually accomplish'd.*

*If*

\* Author of the JEWISH LETTERS.

PREFACE by the French Translator. vij

*If the Regard due to Noblemen of the highest Rank prescrib'd no Limits to the Vanity which their Approbation gives me, I might easily make it appear that, even in Paris, the JEWISH LETTERS have found as warm Partisans as in Holland, or in England. Our Endeavours should aspire to please Men of Wit and superior Talents; what Matter tho' we be not in Favour with a Knot of Dunces, Monks and Bigots? Is what they disapprove of the less valuable?*

*Some of the Learned, to whose Taste it shall always be my Glory to submit, were desirous that AARON MONCECA should have given Abridgments of some curious Books: This would have been no difficult Thing, since I have by me several Letters of his, translated and ready for the Press, which treat only of Literature, but the Bookseller, more intent on pleasing the Publick, than the small Number of the Learned, was inclin'd to publish those first which regarded Manners and Customs, being persuaded that they wou'd be more agreeable to the general Taste, and more easily dispos'd of. In the Second Volume of this Work, due Care will be taken to please, alternately, the Learn'd, the Beaus, and the Ladies (who ought to have had the Precedency) and a Truce is offer'd, in the Course of this Volume, even to the Monks, the Subjects of it running on Gallantry, Learning, and Manners.*





A  
LETTER from Mr. D\*\*\*\*  
TO THE  
BOOKSELLER.



T<sup>h</sup> last I have obtain'd of AARON MONCECA what you so earnestly desired; he consents that I send you regularly a Translation of the principal Letters which he shall write on the Subjects that he thinks worthy of his Consideration; and has also promis'd to communicate the Answers of his Friend ISAAC ONIS, Rabby of *Constantinople*, and those of JACOB BRITO, a *Jew of Genoa*, his Correspondent in *Italy*. As he has changed his Name since he came to *France*, he has no Measures to keep, so that Secrecy on your Part is only necessary with Respect to the Translator, whom you wou'd lay under the Necessity (if known) to conceal



conceal the Names \* of those mentioned in the Letters, and to soften certain Expressions which represent in their natural Colours the real Sentiments of these Philosophical *Hebrews*.

\* The Adventures inserted in these Letters are conformable to the exactest Truth.



PREFACE



# P R E F A C E

BY THE

## English Translator.



*REFACES* are so much like printed Bills, pasted upon Play-house Doors, to give an Account of the Entertainment you are to expect within, that were it not in pure Compliance to Custom, one wou'd forswear writing any: But the World is humorous, and must be serv'd according to its own Fashion. Every Thing is despis'd that is not modish, and he that publishes a Book, without civilly accosting his Reader at the Beginning, is thought to intrench upon good Manners.

To prevent all such Inconveniencies, 'tis thought fit to say a Word or two, not in Praise of the English Translation, but of the French, which must be allowed, by those who are acquainted with that Language, to be writ with great Spirit. I am willing to take the Blame of all Defects upon myself; and if the indulgent Reader should excuse the Roughness, Want of Elegancy, and Carelesness of Expression, and fancy that I rather chuse to follow my Author, as close as the Difference of Idioms will admit, than to give myself a Latitude for the Sake of a sweet Period,

or

PREFACE by the English Translator. xi

or a delicate Cadence, it won'd be treating me really better than I deserve.

Tho' our Author's Philosophy may sometimes differ from the Systems of our modern Virtuosi, yet it may pass Muster in a Jew, since it's taken for granted, that the Men of that Faith rarely apply themselves to such Studies, or, at least, not in the Method used in Christian Schools: They may have the same Ideas of natural Things as we, but they express themselves in a different Manner.

As for his Morals, they are solid and grave, and such as could not be reprehended, even in a Christian Writer, if we reduce what he says to Universals, for abstracting from the particular Obligations which he had to his native Religion, there will be found little Difference between his Ethicks and ours. He every where recommends Loyalty, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance, Prudence, and all those other Virtues which are requisite to fill up the Character of a Hero or a Saint.

And who will condemn him for patronising the Religion and Interest in which he was bred? It being natural for all Men to adhere to the Notions they have suck'd in with their Mother's Milk: In this also he shews great Moderation, and a more unbiass'd Temper, than one won'd expect from a Jew, which may, in part, be ascrib'd to the Opportunities he had of conversing with the learned and accomplish'd Persons he met with in the different Countries where he travell'd.

As I have already acknowledg'd my own Inabilities, if the Criticks fall foul of this Translation, I shall conclude that they do it with a View to lessen the Reputation of the JEWISH LETTERS, or, at least, to heighten their own Characters, as Wits and Criticks, Masters of Languages, and the grand Patentees of humane Sense. But if the Fair Sex (for whose Entertainment I have made this bold Attempt) should

xij PREFACE by the English Translator.

*should be on my side, let the censorious Man do his worst, I fear him not.*

I'll take the Field, on the proud Critick's Call,  
And fight for Fame, till he, or I, shall fall.

*One Word more, and I have done: Something very handsome will, no doubt, be expected from our first Appearance, but I'm afraid it won't answer to Expectation, and the Reason of it is obvious: Our Author had been but a few Days in Paris when he wrote his first and second Letters, and therefore could not have Opportunity of making such curious Remarks, as he has done in the Sequel. This I hope will apologize for their Dulness, and, at the same Time, prevail with the Publick, not to judge of the Piece by the Pattern.*



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Isaac Onis, Aaron Monceca, & Jacob Brito, *presenting their*  
 JEWISH LETTERS  
 to Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, & Master Nicholas the Barber.



# JEWISH LETTERS.

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## LETTER I.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS,  
*Rabby of Constantinople.*



AFTER great Fatigue, my dear Isaac, I am at last got to *Paris*, and since I left *Constantinople*, I could not, till now, write to you; I would have willingly done it from *Marseilles*, but was so hurry'd with Business the short Time I stay'd there, that I was forced to deny myself that Pleasure. Happy was it for me, that I knew the Language of the Country, without which it had been impossible to finish any Affairs. I have hitherto had no Opportunity of reaping any Advantage from the Plan which thou traced out for my Conduct, nor of thy Instructions founded upon acquired Experience at the Courts of *Germany*, *Poland*, and the *North*.

B

IN

IN traversing a Country, without stopping, but to eat and sleep, a Man can learn nothing; so that, for this Time, you must put up with a few trifling Road-Adventures, and some loose Observations on the Subjects of Discourse with three Fellow-Travellers. The next Letter shall make Amends for the Void of this, since I find, from the short Time I've been here, that I shall not want Matter to keep up our Correspondence.

MY Friend at *Marseilles* recommended me to his Correspondent at *Lyons*, who forced me to accept of a Lodging at his House, and conducted me to the Coach when I set out for *Paris*: We were four in it, two Merchants, an Officer, and myself. Scarce had we travelled two Leagues, when we became as familiar as if we had been of ten Years Acquaintance: They were so complaisant, as to answer all my Questions with a surprising Politeness and Affability; and I perceive that the *French*, in their own Country, shew more Civility to Strangers, than they do elsewhere. 'Tis pretty much their Failing at *Constantinople*, to approve of nothing but what comes from *France*, or what is done there. Two Days Journey from *Lyons*, at *Chalon*, upon the River *Saone*, alighting at an Inn, we heard a prodigious Noise, and saw a vast Crowd of People assembled at the Door of a neighbouring House; having enquired the Reason of this Tumult, a Person standing by told us the Subject: " Gentlemen, said he, the House  
 " where you see all this Mob, belongs to Mr.  
 " *Mirobolan*, Apothecary, who has just now made  
 " himself known in a glorious Manner, and shall  
 " henceforth be listed among the illustrious Saints  
 " of the horned Fraternity: But to unriddle this  
 " Mystery, you must know, that his Spouse, reduced  
 " to short Allowance, had pitch'd  
 " upon



“ upon a vigorous young Fellow, his Apprentice,  
“ to supply her Wants; and unfortunately the  
“ Husband popp’d in upon them, when they least  
“ expected him: In his first Transport, he got  
“ hold of an old Family Musquet, with an In-  
“ tention to sacrifice his Rival; but, as Provi-  
“ dence would have it, this Instrument of Death,  
“ wiser than himself, refused to fire, which gave  
“ the Lover Time to reach the Window, and take  
“ a Leap into the Street: The Wife call’d out  
“ Murder; the Neighbours alarm’d, came rushing  
“ in, and found the enraged Husband mawling  
“ his dear Half with the But-End of the Gun;  
“ and, believe me, it was no easy Matter to di-  
“ arm this terrible Cuckold, and rescue the poor  
“ Woman, whom meer Necessity had forced to  
“ substitute another in his Place.” What will be  
done, Sir, said I, to this Adulteress? What can  
they do to her? answered he; she’ll directly give  
in a Complaint against her Husband, who, having  
no Witnesses of the pretended Affront to his Hon-  
our, will be oblig’d to allow her a separate Main-  
tenance. You’re certainly under a Mistake, Sir,  
replied I: What! would you punish a Husband  
for his Wife’s Crimes! Such are our Laws, an-  
swered he, and our Civilians, Patterns to gentle  
tame Husbands, have approv’d and sustain’d them  
by thousands of Volumes.

WHAT think’st thou, my dear *Isaac*, of the  
Confusion and Disorder in the Christian Customs  
and Manners? They are constantly extolling the  
Beauty and Regularity of their Morals, and yet  
Adultery passes among them for a Piece of Gal-  
lantry. What Difference betwixt *Israel’s* Inno-  
cency and Christian Debaucheries! Our Wives  
think it their greatest Glory to love none but their  
Husbands; and ’tis from the tender conjugal Love  
alone,

alone, they look for that glorious Lamp, which will dart its lucid Rays from one to t'other Hemisphere: If sometimes human Frailty and Weakness get the better of Reason and Modesty, the Care they take in shading their Misfortunes from publick Discovery, effaces a Part of the Crime.

THE *Nazarites* look upon false Steps in Women, as an inexhaustable Fund for Railery and Jest; and truly my Fellow-Traveller, the Officer, laughed very heartily at the Concern I seemed to be under: His Discourse is so deeply imprinted in my Mind, that I shall, as near as possible, use his very Words, that my Expressions may be as original and extraordinary as the Facts that I am to relate. It may easily be perceived, said he, that you come from another World: How! a coquetish Lady to surprize you! If you make any Stay here, you'll relinquish this austere Virtue, and become more sociable. What! Sir, said I, are such Scenes frequent in this Country? No! answer'd he, all our Husbands are not so silly as this Apothecary, nor expose themselves to publick Censure for such Trifles. Why then, reply'd I, Matrimony in this Part of the World, must be the worst of States, since it renders what ought to make Life happy, it's chiefest Misery. You're in a Mistake, Sir, said he; such Accidents are made familiar to us by Custom: The Fate of our Neighbours, Parents, and Friends, not only prepares us for our own, but also makes us sit pretty easy under it: Besides, Marriage, here, is a Branch of Trade; the Value of a Wife is more or less, according to her Fortune; and she's measured by her Gold, as a Piece of Cloth by it's Ells: A thousand Crowns are the Value of thirty Ounces of Virtue; and, at this Rate, what an Angel must she be, who brings her Husband an hundred thousand.

## JEWISH LETTERS.

sand. I fancy, answered I, that a Woman must be pretty indifferent about a Husband, who values her only for her Money, and that the Loss of him will not affect her much. Few die with Grief for being left Widows, said he, smiling; and yet, in such Cases, they all observe a mighty Ceremonial.

“WHEN a Woman loses her Husband, one would think that she resolved not to survive him: She shuts herself up in her Apartment, stripp'd of all the gay Furniture, and nothing to be seen but deep and doleful Black; in this Sort of Tomb sits the afflicted Fair, bewailing her unhappy Fate; Floods of Tears stream from her Eyes, and with her Shrieks she rends the Skies: But as Excess of Grief may have an unhappy Influence on a Lady's Charms, her Hours of Mourning are but few, a Bosom-Friend thus whispers in her Ear, You're young and lovely, Nature has not bestowed such Charms on you to bury them; your Husband is gone, for ever gone: Religion commands Submission, and your Years intitle you to a new Choice; few there are who would not aspire to be the happy Man: Let the *Chevalier* who loved you while in the Possession of another, be preferr'd. The Widow blushes, casts down her Eyes, and affects to be indifferent; but enter Lover, and all is over: The dead Husband is scarce in his Grave, when she's in the Arms of another.”

Is not such Behaviour, dear *Isaac*, the Effects of a visible Punishment from Heaven? In former Times *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* were swallowed up by the *Red Sea*; and God seems to plunge the *Nazarites* into an Abyss of Perdition and Reprobation. He has secured his own People from these

Excesses, and Vice has not crept in amongst us. Our Wives conjointly with us, have made their Vows to Heaven, and blessed the God of *Israel*, who has not poured on them, nor on their Children, a Spirit of Perdition. Hast thou ever seriously reflected, my Friend, on the Character of our *Jewish* Women? They are the only Persons of their Sex in the Universe, on whom the Manners and Customs of Countries have no Influence; every where free, and every where modest: In *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Africa*, their Virtue is the same; but how different the Women of other Religions. Doors, Bolts, and vigilant Eunuchs, are the Guardians of *Mahometan* Chastity: They have as strong Inclinations to Infidelity as the *Nazarites*, and are more easily seduced; Restraint inspires Revenge, and they seldom lose a favourable Occasion. Virtue alone is the Rule of the Daughters of *Sion*: They're as free in *Asia* as the *Europeans*, and chaste as the *Mahometans*, not to be seduc'd by the Debaucheries of *Nazarite* Countries, or tempted by bad Example.

WHAT this Officer said concerning his Countrywomen, made me anxious to be more fully informed of their Characters, in order to lessen the Surprize which Customs and Manners, so different from ours, must otherwise have given me, when I came to *Paris*; and therefore, in Quality of a Stranger, I begg'd that he wou'd favour me with some general Ideas, which might serve as Guides to conduct me through a Labyrinth, where, in all Probability, without such Helps, I must be lost.

" Our Women, answers he, may be divided into  
 " two Classes, which comprehend all the rest:  
 " The Gay and Gallantish form the first, and the  
 " Devotees the other: Tho', to Appearance, their  
 " Schemes of Life are directly opposite, yet their  
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“ Aims are the same, and, by different Routes,  
“ terminate in Gallantry, the precise Point that  
“ reunites the two different Characters; but it  
“ well be necessary to examine them separately.

“ A WELL-BRED polite Lady must not pre-  
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“ noon. As it wou'd be highly undecent and  
“ vulgar to share in the Husband's Bed, each have  
“ their separate Apartments: For Weeks together  
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“ or Plays, where to avoid the Imputation of Jeal-  
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“ have the Honour of her Presence, but reflecting  
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“ her Imagination is so warm'd with amorous  
“ Scenes, that she leaves the House wholly wrapt  
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“ Action with a Lover, till Five in the Morn-  
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“ THE devout Lady is an Enemy to all the  
“ bustling Scenes of Life, and restrains her Pas-  
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“ a giddy-headed Beau; the Abbot is her Man,  
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“ Every Woman must not pretend to the Con-  
 “ quest of a Prelate, or a Prebend, these are Tre-  
 “ sors reserved for such only of the Sex who are  
 “ born under the Influence of some happy Planet :  
 “ But there’s still a second Class, Monks and  
 “ Friars (those contemptible and useless Mem-  
 “ bers of the State) who can serve upon a Pinch,  
 “ and who are in Gallantry, what the *Swiss* are  
 “ in *France*, auxiliary Troops, and enjoy all the  
 “ Privileges of the Nation. Their Characters of  
 “ Confessors, and Directors of Consciences, pro-  
 “ cure them every where open Doors, and the  
 “ Husband blesses the happy Day in which the  
 “ holy Father took upon him the Management  
 “ of his Wife and Family.”

WHAT Debauchery ! what Depravation of Man-  
 ners ! I could scarce give Credit to this odd Ac-  
 count, but if there’s no Imposition, judge what a  
 copious Field I have to walk in, and if I shall be  
 at a Loss for Matter to entertain thee with. O !  
 how I hug myself in being born a *Jew*, such Dis-  
 orders are not to be bore with, let me rather be  
 for ever depriv’d of the Sweetness of Marriage, than  
 to taste them with a Christian Partner. Thou  
 knowest more than another the Value of *Jewish*  
 Wives, and, in *Sarah*, possessest one of the most  
 accomplish’d ; the orderly Government of thy  
 House and Family is her principal Occupation,  
 she disdains not even to assist the Domesticks in  
 their servile Employments, and, to shew her Dif-  
 ference and Submission, prepares and presents,  
 with her own Hand, the Coffee and Sherbet ; and  
 what spare Time she has is employ’d in instructing  
 her Children in our holy Law ; this is her Diver-  
 sion, and this the whole of her Recreation. I beg  
 thou’lt shew her the Letters which I shall send  
 thee, perhaps they may divert her.

I HAVE



## JEWISH LETTERS.

9

I HAVE not as yet heard from *Marseilles* or *Genoa*. I have writ to *Jacob Brito*, at *Livorno*, and expect his Answer soon.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER II.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

WERE thou to see me, my dear *Isaac*, in my new Dress, thou could'st not possibly know me; in Place of a *Turkish* Robe, and furr'd sable Cap, which kept my Head warm, I'm got into a short *French* Coat, and wear a thin Wig, which is no Defence against Cold. Without this Metamorphosis I should have had all the Mob at my Heels, and the better Sort gazing on me as I went along, so that my Aversion to this whimsical Dress yielded to Necessity. The Taylor assured me that my Cloaths were of a polite genteel Taste, and perfectly *a la Mode*. A young Fop, who lodges in the same House, took upon him the Direction of this weighty Affair: As his own Coat was a Master-piece, and ow'd its Perfection to his Invention, it was, after mature Deliberation, decreed that it should serve as a Model for mine, and surely no more elaborate Original could be found from whence to draw a Copy, since he protested that his Invention had been, for a whole Month, upon the Rack about the Sleeves, and the greatest Part of the Summer about the rest, exclusive of Waistcoat and Breeches. It wou'd appear, Sir, said I, that you have no Affairs of Consequence upon your Hands, since you employ so much Time about

about Trifles. What! Sir, answered he, do you call the Invention of a new Mode a *Bagatel*? One may easily perceive that you come from some barbarous Country, that knows nothing of Taste: There's more Talents, more Ingenuity, and more Science, required in making a genteel Suit of Cloaths, than in building a magnificent Palace. Do you imagine that he who can make narrow Shoulders appear large, and flatten round ones, and order a Hoop, a Plait, a Sleeve, according to the strict Laws of Mode, can be any other than an exquisite Artist? There's no attaining to such a Degree of Perfection without long Study, and profound Meditation, and if we have not naturally a Genius, notwithstanding of all our Application, we must still be confined to the lowest Sphere of Knowledge: The Talent of Dressing is the Gift of Heaven, many are earnest to have it, but few are so happy as to obtain it.

Who could forbear laughing at such silly Stuff? Of whatever Errors I believed Men capable, I did not imagine that they extended so far, as to make a Plait more or less in a Coat a Matter of Consequence! I asked a Gentleman, who employs his Time on Things more essential than Fashions, if there were many People in *Paris* wedded to such Follies? There are more than you could believe, answered he; Mode is the Foible of our Men, and the Madness of our Women: When a Lady has got through the Work of the Toilet, the rest of the Forenoon is employed in fitting and adjusting a Gown bought the Day before: In the Evening she goes to the Play, and is under the utmost Consternation to see some of the top Ladies with Gowns of a new Taste, for, from Noon to Three, the Mode had changed; quite ashamed of her Dress, away she goes at the second Act, drives home like  
one

one furious, and shuts herself up till a Dozen of Mantua-Makers, hard at Work all Night, have made her fit to appear next Day; but 'tis not on Cloaths alone that Fashion exercises Authority, all the Actions of Life, nay even Religion itself, are under her Influence. A Confessor must be *a la Mode*: The Curate, who had last Week four hundred Ladies of Quality under his Direction, has now only the Charge of two or three Servant-Maids; a *Maturin* Monk, a *Franciscan* or *Austin* Frier have deplaced him, and they, in their Turns, are cut out by a *Minime*, who, in a few Days, must undergo the same Fate. The Word of God, the Mysteries of Faith, all must be *a la Mode*; and if a Preacher be not an Orator, and in Vogue, he may hold forth to the Pews, or at least can expect nothing but the Mob; People of Fashion will no more regard him, than they would a *Mandarin* from *China*, preaching up the Doctrine of *Confucius*, whom perhaps out of Curiosity they might be tempted to hear. Our Notions of Religion are also subject to Mode; such who for a certain Time professed *Molinism*, are now high flying *Jansenists*, and, in a little Time, change Sides again; To-day, *Jansenism* prevails, To-morrow, perhaps, will end its Reign.

NOVELTY reaches the very Saints; St. \* *Genevieve* has cut out St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, and she yields to St. † *Paris*, who is now the Hero, and will be till some other starts up. In short, the Love of God has also been subject to Mode; a Time has been, wherein a certain Set of Men, who valued themselves on Austerities of Life, have thought they were exempted from it, and have accordingly introduced this abominable Tenet,

\* The Patroness of *Paris*.

† A famous *Jansenist*, at whose Tomb Miracles were perform'd.

net, endeavouring to support it with ridiculous and wretched Arguments.

WHAT think'st thou, my dear *Isaac*, of a Religion subject to Change? Stability and Immutability are the Marks of Truth; that Daughter of Heaven is not wavering, she runs not after Novelty, nor falls in with the chimerical Notions of Men. Hast thou ever seen amongst *Pagans*, even of the grossest Idolatry, any Thing so monstrous, as to debate, Whether Love be due from the Creature to the Creator? When God gave the Law to his People, this was the first Commandment: The *Nazarites* believe and teach the same Laws which were writ on Mount *Sinai*; how comes it then to pass, that they are not supported by them against such abominable Errors? 'Tis my Opinion, that the God of *Abraham* has pour'd upon them that Spirit of Perversion which forces them to act against Light. The constant Cry against us is, Infatuation and Indocility: Wou'd they have us embrace a Law that, by logical Sophistry, throws a Veil over the clearest and most necessary Precept, the Love of God? Let us abandon them, dear *Isaac*, to their Blindness, and only take Notice of their Opinions and Maxims, so far as they may serve for our Instruction.

THE Gentleman who spoke so judiciously, is call'd the *Chevalier Maisin*, and has been in *Italy*, *Egypt*, and at *Grand-Cairo*. Merit wherever it is found, is in esteem with him, and the Difference of Nation and Religion has no Influence on his Ideas. As he's perfectly Master of the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Languages, I made him a Present of a *Homer* in Manuscript, which I had brought with me from *Smyrna*. This Gentleman frequents the Learned, and those who cultivate Arts and Sciences, and has promised to introduce me to their Acquaintance,



Acquaintance, which will, no doubt, furnish me with Materials for carrying on our Philosophical Correspondence.

THE Beau, whom they call the *Marquis de Farcin*, has undertaken to introduce me to several of the first Rate Ladies, and accordingly was to have accompanied me Yesterday to the Opera, but a new Muff and Belt of an exquisite Taste, which will exceedingly raise his Reputation, oblig'd him to make his Appearance first at the *French Comedy*; for which Reason, the *Chevalier de Maisin* was oblig'd to do me that Favour in his Place.

I HAD no distinct Notion of what they call Royal Academy of Musick, and this pompous Title had, in Part, occasioned my Error. I entered into a Hall, of which the further End is adorned with a Theatre, and the rest surrounded with three Rows of \* Tribunes, built one above another, and all crowded with Persons of both Sexes. In the Middle of this Edifice there was a great Multitude of People standing †, who by the Help of Spying-Glasses, carefully examined the Physiognomies and Dress of the Ladies. The Moment the Glass was pointed at a particular Lady, she softly turned her Eyes, simpered in a lovely sweet Manner, and tossed her Fan with great Dexterity, till such time as the Oglers began to survey her Neighbour, who immediately displayed her Art.

SIR, said I to the *Chevalier*, be so kind as to inform me what those People are, who appear to be so curious, and why those Ladies give themselves so much Trouble? The Persons whom you see in the Pit, answered he, are our Beaus, by Birth Examiners and Comptrollers of Wo-

C

mens

\* Boxes.

† In France the Pit has no Banks to sit on.

mens Dress; as also the sole Judges of their Merit, Tempers, and Honesty. Do you observe that Lady, who is actually under Inspection? In a Moment it will be absolutely determined, that the Abbot, her Gallant all Summer, is turned off, since the Arrival of a young Officer, who has waited on her Yesterday, and the Day before, at the *Italian* and *French* Comedies, and now attends her here. She who was examined before her, has undergone a more severe Sentence; 'tis found, that her Head-Dress is not strictly regular, that she smiles awkwardly, and that her Eyes are dull.

WHILE the *Chevalier* instructed me in these Particularities, of which I had not the least Notion, a surprizing Symphony struck my Ears; I looked about to observe from whence it came, and at last perceived the Musicians in a \*Hole at the Foot of the Theatre. In a little Time thereafter, a Woman, attended by some others, appeared, and, advancing some Steps with a solemn Gravity, began to sing, and the others soon mixed their Voices with her's; they were, by and by, joined by some Men, who augmented the Confort: By this Time I began to conceive, that what they called an Opera, was a Comedy set to Musick; of which I might have seen they had taken the first Idea from the Chorus of the ancient *Greek* Tragedies. The Pleasure which the Singing, Machinery, and Dancing gave, put a Stop, for a while, to my Questions; but Curiosity at last prevailing, I begged to know the Names of some of those Ladies who formed this Royal Academy; I was so far from imagining that such a magnificent Title could be bestowed on common Players, that I concluded they must be the Prime of the Court. What do you mean by Court Ladies,  
answered

\* Orchestre.

answered he? Those you see on the Stage, are Women hired to sing; that Queen of *Crete* formerly botched old Stockings at *Rouen*, and the Princess, her Sister, has the Honour to be sprung from a Cobler: There are few or none of those Queens and Princesses, who have not made some Trips to the House of Correction, not to mention their frequent Retreats, when they had Occasion for a skilful Chirurgeon. All those People, continued he, whom you see on the Theatre, are excommunicated and separated from our Church; our Priests look upon them as unworthy of Sepulture, and this Contempt hardens them in their Debaucheries. Why are they suffered then, said I? and why are People allowed to hear them, and thereby to prove a Means of their Perdition? Play-houses are necessary, reply'd he, in a large Town; they divert the Publick agreeably, are a Sort of Refreshment to the Studious, an Amusement to the gayer Sort of Folks, prevent Gaming, suspend Detraction and Calumny amongst the Sex, and hinder Drinking and Quarrels. Why don't you then, answer'd I, hinder your Priests from covering with Ignominy, Persons so useful to Society? I see that, with you, Church and State have separate Duties and Maxims. You are in the right, said the *Chevalier*; Necessity will have it so: If our Religion was as simple and as plain as yours, our Priests would have less Opportunity to embroil it; it would then approach to Nature and common Sense; but, with us, all is Mystery, all is Revelation! What the Depositaries of our Faith touch, becomes sacred in their Hands; and their Ambition leading them to extend their Pretensions without Limitation, the State could no otherwise secure itself from their Invasion, but by the Difference of Manners and

Maxims: The Church often excommunicates a Man for the very Reason which renders him dear to the Republick, and often procures him a Pension from the Prince.

THIS Discourse recall'd to my Memory what I had seen at *Constantinople*, where many *Mahometans* make no Scruple to drink Wine, to neglect the Fast of *Ramazan*, and their Pilgrimage to *Mecca*: Such is the Fate of Religions, which impose an insufferable Yoke, and a Heap of useless Maxims; at the long Run they lie neglected and unobserved: Man, born free, breaks at last the Chains of Slavery, which would deprive him of the Use of Life and civil Society.

THERE'S a Report here, that the Affairs of *Persia* are in a Situation not at all favourable to the *Porte*; if this be true, I can't conceive the Meaning of an immediate Rupture with the *Muscovites*: Let me know thy Sentiments; if thou hast been exact in answering my Letters, I shall soon hear from thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



### LETTER III.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THOUGH Arts and Sciences are cultivated in this Country, yet they're not to be push'd but to a certain Point; the *French* must not meddle with grand Subjects; the Court and Clergy are insuperable Barriers to the Discoveries and Progress of Study and Meditation; a Metaphysician must accommodate his Philosophy to the Politicks of the State, and the foolish Conceits of Monks,  
or



or communicate his Ideas to none but intimate Friends, in the most private Manner; if his Opinions come abroad, the Church excommunicates, and the Government banishes, or throws him in Jail.

FIVE or six Months ago, a \* *Frenchman*, who had acquired Reputation, took it in his Head to publish a † Book, which contain'd many free and bold Things, supported with convincing Arguments, and full of Wit: The Monks raised the Hue and Cry, and got him banish'd the Kingdom, not so much for the Errors found in his Performance, as on Account of some Wipes which he had given them.

THE ‡ *Ostracisme*, to which the *Greeks* condemn'd their Fellow-Citizens, is the Fate of the Learned in this Country: When a Man becomes eminent, and, by his Genius, raises himself above others in Learning, he's presently banish'd. However extraordinary this may appear to thee, I can now attest the Truth of it. The famous *Descartes*, whose Philosophy thou hast read with so much Pleasure, was obliged to retire to the remotest Parts of the *North*; the monachal Fury pursued him even thither, and, dead as he is, wages daily War against him. \*\* One of the most eminent Divines, whose Works were the firmest Prop of the *Nazarite* Religion, was banish'd, and forc'd to retire into *Flanders*; and, some Time thereafter, the § Retreat of some learned and pious Men, whose Writings will be transmitted to latest Posterity, was burnt and raz'd to the Ground: The Monks themselves headed the Troops commanded to execute this Project, and triumphed over the Ruins of this House, as the *Greeks* over

C 3

Troy,

\* *Voltaire*. † Philosophical Letters. ‡ Ten Years Banishment, to which the *Athenians* condemn'd those of their Citizens, who were too powerful. \*\* *Mr. Arnould*. § *Port-Royal*.

*Troy*, with this Difference, which distinguishes the Christian Cruelty, that *Achilles* dug not *Hector* out of the Ground, and that his dragging him round the Camp, was only owing to an immediate Impulse of Rage; whereas the Monks untombed the Dead, and, after innumerable Outrages committed on their Bodies, left many of them expos'd to the Avidity of wild Beasts.

THE *French* love Sciences, and yet are afraid to acquire them: What strange Caprice is this, and how different from the Character of the *English*? Nothing but Truth can satisfy them, the Discovery of it is their constant Study, and they reward those who can find it. The Learned in *France* may be compared to Birds, whose Wings are clipp'd to prevent their soaring too high: Whatever Genius the Nation may boast of, yet this slavish Fear diffuses thro' all their Writings, a certain Air of Constraint, tiresome both to the Author and Reader. Some of them have Recourse to foreign Printers, to avoid falling into these Defects, and to express their Sentiments with Freedom; but their Books are looked upon as prohibited Goods, and infectious, and strict Orders given to the Guards of the Frontiers to prevent their entering the Kingdom; and if they happen to get clear of these watchful *Argus*'s, it is not without great Subtilty and Management.

THIS perpetual Restraint, under which the Assemblies of the Learned lie, renders their Productions imperfect: There are several Societies at *Paris* that bear the Name of *Academy*, the principal and most ancient is the *French Academy*, which has, hitherto, produced nothing but a Heap of Complements: 'Tis composed of forty Persons, who assemble thrice a Week, and are mighty exact, because the King bestows a silver Medal on  
each

each who is present, and orders that the Medals of those who are absent, shall be given to those who attend. Their Assemblies, for near four-score Years, have afforded little or nothing but Speeches of Congratulation, Reception, and mutual Encomiums on each others Talents and Merit: Sometimes they are employed in regulating a Word, or a Syllable; then the whole Members dispute, study, and are hard at Work for six Months; and, at last, pronounce a Sentence of Explosion against a certain Phrase; but it often happens that, the Publick having no Regard to the Decree, all their Labour is lost. For fifty Years they were busied about a Dictionary, which was advertised in a grand and pompous Manner; at last it appeared, and was generally despised. About this Time, another, composed by a single Member, and universally esteem'd, gave the finishing Stroke. The Academy, in order to revenge their Honour affronted, shipwreck'd what little they had remaining, by excluding out of their Society a \* Member whose only Crime was, that he had merited the Esteem of the Publick.

UNDER *Louis XIV*, all the most eminent Men were of this Academy; if they were dilatory in their Reception, that Monarch gave his Commands, but since his Death a Knot of Ecclesiasticks, Prelates, and quality Rakes, have succeeded to them: † Comedians have obtained Places amongst them, and even two or three Vaulters, and Merry-Andrews, have been preferred to five or six Gentlemen of the first Rank, whom they have for ever excluded, because they exposed this ridiculous Conduct.

WE have here a second Society for Literature, called, *Academy of Sciences*, which justly deserves the

\* *Furetiere*. † *French Comedians*.

the highest Praises, because their Studies are profound and useful; and tho' they're under the Necessity of confining their Reflections on Metaphysics within a certain Compass, yet many curious and useful Discoveries in Astronomy, Physick, &c. are daily brought to Light by their Application; and I make no doubt, my dear *Isaac*, but that they would favour the Publick (were they not restrained and bridled) with such Master-pieces, as would soon dissipate the Mist of Illusion; but as it is the Interest of the Monks to keep the People in the Dark, lest they should discover their Cheats and Impositions, which would be attended with the Downfal of their Credit, Ignorance must reign, or they're undone.

WHAT think'st thou of a Religion whose Depositories must be believed on their Word, and neither accountable or liable to be comptrolled? I look upon such Divines, as Merchants, who would have their Customers to receive their Goods without Examination. 'Tis thus the Sovereign \* Pontife of the *Nazarites* acts with those of his Communion; they must yield a blind Obedience to his † Statutes and Ordinances, and joyfully load themselves with his Chains; and, even as the *Turks*, when they receive the String, respectfully kiss the Instrument of their Death: But this is not all, his Ambition leads him to the Extravagancy of assuming a ‡ Title only due to the *Messiah*, who will one Day come to brighten the Glory of *Israel*.

I CAREFULLY examined by what Means the Monks had attained to such an unbounded Credit, and had several Conversations on this Subject with Men of Letters, who spoke without Pre-  
vention and Passion. I could easily perceive that  
Hypocrisy

\* Pope. † Bulls. ‡ God's Lieutenant, or Vicar on Earth,



Hypocrisy and Cheat had been the principal Springs: The People are easily led away by the first Objects that strike; Appearances affect them, and they never examine Things to the Bottom: The austere Life, the coarse Cloaths, and the humble and contrite Air of the Friars and Monks, are so many Screens to their Debaucheries and Disorders. This thou'lt see verified by the following Adventure, which the *Chevalier de Maisin* (formerly mentioned) told me.

IN one of the principal Towns of the Kingdom, a young *Carmelite* Monk, named Father *Angelo*, made frequent Visits to a Mantua-maker; much oftner than to the Parish-Church; his Conversation ran on Subjects more light and gay than Religion: Tho' by the Rule of his Order he was to have no Commerce with the Sex, yet he did not think proper to subject himself to such a rigorous tyrannical Constraint, and therefore used the Privilege of *Grecian* Priests. During six Months he enjoy'd a profound Peace, without the least Interruption to his Happiness, till one Day that an old Woman, who lodg'd in the Chamber immediately above, perceiv'd a Chink in the Floor, through which she could observe what was done below: Curiosity tempting her to peep, the first Object that presented itself, was the *Carmelite* and Mantua-maker in a Situation which Modesty can't describe. The old Woman, surpriz'd, and very much offended at this unbecoming Sight, calls out to the Neighbours, and makes a terrible Bustle: The People come running in Crowds, and all's in Confusion; one thinks the House is on Fire; another, that Murder or Robbery is committing in it; but as soon as the old Matron told the Subject of the Alarm, all is hush and calm: The Neighbours, however, resolving to catch the amorous

rous Monk, plant Centries at the Door, and dispatch a Messenger for the Prior to come and witness this young Hero's gallant Exploits : In a little Time Father *Bonaventure* arrives, and, with a magisterial Tone, commands open Doors ; but the Lover, deaf to the Word of Command, resolves to keep out the Fort to the last Extremity ; upon which a general Attack ensues, and the Door broke open, and then the Superior, at the Head of the Mob, re-conducts this stray'd Sheep to the Fold.

THOU'LT, no doubt, imagine, my dear *Isaac*, that this Monk has received the Punishment inflicted on the *Roman* Vestals ; but he was quit for nine gentle Whippings, and two Days short Allowance, and all for the Scandal given, for if the Crime had been *Sub rosa*, and only known to his Fraternity, it wou'd have pass'd for a *Peccadillo*.

SUCH Adventures happen daily, but the silly deluded People are not less blind, their Credulity surpasses the Deceit of those who cheat them, and he who pretends to be guided by the Light of Reason, is look'd upon as an Innovator, a Man suspected, and even a Heretick Convict. A *Nazarite* may find Mercy with an offended God, but none with the Monks.

HAPPY our Religion, my dear *Isaac*, and happy our Law : Our Doctors disdain the Acquisition of a vain Esteem founded on our Blindness ; they have imprinted in us a Horror of Sin, and hate it themselves : Our Rabbies love us as their Children, and we respect them as our Fathers ; they conduct us by Reason, and make the Care of our Instruction their only Claim to our Esteem. I defy the *Nazarites* to charge our Doctors with the Excesses to which their Priests are addicted : Let them attack them as much as they please on their pretended

tended Visions. Every equitable Person will acknowledge, that it might be easily made appear there's more Imposition and Folly in that single Book of \* *Mary Alacoque*, than in the immense Works of all our Rabbies. When the Merchant of *Pera* lent us that Book, and assured that a Bishop, a learned Divine, had been the Author, I concluded that some Enemy had father'd this Heap of Puerilities upon him, in order to cast a Blemish upon his Reputation; but since I came to *France*, I have been certainly informed, that this Prelate glories in the Production of that ridiculous Fable.

IF thou hast been exact to write to me, I expect a Letter by the first Post. 'Tis needless to recommend Circumspection. I'm in a Kingdom where a Stranger, in Time of War, is suspected, and my Letters may be intercepted. If thou desirest that I should faithfully communicate what comes within my Reach, and may tend to the Glory of our holy Law, or to the Knowledge of the Customs and Manners of Countries where I shall travel; then be sure to mention nothing in thy Letters that may concern the Government of States, or the Person of Sovereigns: One of thy Prudence and Solidity, in whatever Country he is, respects those to whom God has committed the Conduct of the People; the Difference of Religion is no sufficient Motive to think otherwise, nor can it serve as a Pretext to the Contempt of those in Authority: Our Books have upon Record a famous Example in *Mordecai's* Discovery of a Conspiracy against *Ahasuerus*, who held *Israel* captive.

BE careful of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers bestow his Favours abundantly on thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

P. S.

\* The mystical Life of a pretended She-Saint, writ by the Bishop of *Soissons*, in *France*.

P. S. SINCE I ended my Letter, the *Chevalier de Maisin* has shew'd me one writ by a Friend of his in *Holland*; I found it so comical, that I begg'd his Allowance to transcribe a Part of it, which I hope will divert thee.

" I'm infinitely obliged to you for informing  
 " me of the Birth and Adventures of our *Dutch*  
 " \* Abbess, Madam \*\*\*\*\*, the Picture you give  
 " of her fully persuades me that she's the very  
 " Person who made an Elopement from the Monastery with a Lover; and your mentioning  
 " the very Time that she was Waiting-Maid to  
 " *Helvetius*, the Physician's Lady, puts the Thing  
 " out of all Doubt; for she's eternally speaking  
 " of him as a Bosom-Friend. On her Arrival in  
 " *Holland*, she took to the first Trade, and was  
 " installed House-keeper to a Citizen of *Rotterdam*;  
 " a brisk young Fellow, the Doctor's Man,  
 " prevailed with her to make a new Breach of  
 " her ancient Vows of Chastity, for which her  
 " Master, who smelt a Rat, sent her a packing.

" SHE retir'd to the *Hague*, where, for a considerable Time, she bubbled several charitable  
 " People; thereafter went to *Amsterdam*, and there  
 " acts the same Part. When she arriv'd at the  
 " *Hague*, where I first knew her, she gave herself  
 " out for a Lady of distinguish'd Birth, but was,  
 " however, a little puzzled whether she should  
 " spring from a private Gentleman, or a dignify'd House; after mature Deliberation, Quality  
 " prevail'd, and she fix'd on the House of *Bouillon*,  
 " but unluckily made out her Relation to it  
 " in such a Manner, that none other but the deceased Cardinal could be her Father; some malicious Wag made her take Notice of this Blunder  
 der

\* See Mademoiselle *Mainville's* Memoirs, Page 214, and following.



“ der, and ever since she makes a Mystery of her  
 “ Birth, allowing People to think as they please  
 “ about it.

“ As there’s no living on Quality and Titles,  
 “ she was even forced to enter into Partnership  
 “ with a Couple of *Jews*, who have advanced  
 “ her a small Matter for buying Trinkets for the  
 “ Ladies. I had Occasion to see her at a Mer-  
 “ chant’s House, where she often goes with Em-  
 “ broideries : Curiosity made me enquire what she  
 “ was, and I’m oblig’d to you for your Informa-  
 “ tion.” I intend to return soon to *Amsterdam*,  
 and shall be diverted with the Confusion that my  
 Knowledge of her Adventures must put her under.



## L E T T E R I V.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I HAVE a nice Question to propose, and pray  
 consult some other Rabbies of thy Acquain-  
 tance about it, that I may know their Sentiments  
 and thine. I have discovered at *Paris* a vast Num-  
 ber of *Jews*, who neither believe nor know that  
 they are such. Thou’lt perhaps think this fictiti-  
 ous, yet nothing is more true : What they call, here,  
 Free-thinkers, Beaus, and Ladies of Fashion, are  
 only external Professors of the *Nazarite* Religion,  
 in their Hearts they disavow it ; ’tis enough for  
 them to believe in God. Several think that the  
 Soul is immortal, and many others (as the *Sad-  
 duces*) maintain its Mortality ; these are in an Er-  
 ror, but I can’t see how we can refuse the Title  
 of *Jews* to the former : They believe in one God,  
 who created the Universe, who rewards the Good,

D

and

punishes the Wicked: What more do we? and is not this the Sum of our Religion? bating some Ceremonies enjoined by our Doctors and Priests, which I might prove, by convincing Reasons, not to be absolutely necessary.

THOU knowest that, notwithstanding of the Inquisition of *Spain*, we have many Brethren still there; the least Suspicion of *Judaism* condemns a Man to the Flames; and therefore, to prevent Discovery, by Inspection, Necessity obliges the *Spanish Jews* to dispense with Circumcision, of all our Ceremonies the most essential. If thou'lt seriously reflect on what I say, thou must admit those *Parisians* into the Number of *Israel's* Children: What an Advantage wou'd it be to our holy Law, could they but be inform'd of what Religion they are, and re-united to our Communion? I wou'd propose that one of our most learned *Rabbies* should be sent, a Man capable to open their Eyes; and, if the Pain of Circumcision startle any, to grant them the same Privilege allowed to the *Jews* of *Portugal* and *Spain*, only observing great Precaution that these Conversions reach'd not the Ears of the Ministry. In *Spain* such just Measures are taken, that it is but seldom those of our Religion are discovered; a Father declares not to his Child that he is a *Jew*, but when he has attained to the Age of Reason, and is very circumspect in the Manner of disclosing the Secret; if he doubts of his renouncing Christianity, he leaves him in his Error; but, the Moment this dangerous Secret is out, if he refuses to embrace the Faith of *Israel*, Death's the Word, he's directly poisoned; a Cruelty which Necessity makes necessary: There's several *Jewish* Physicians in *Spain*, who distribute among the House-keepers a subtil Poison prepared and reserved for that Operation.

SUCH

SUCH Things, my dear *Isaac*, ought to be kept secret from our Enemies, who wou'd accuse us of Cruelty and Treachery; but to prevent our being carried to these Excesses, let them only have a little more Humanity; the Blood of Children, whom Fathers are forced to sacrifice, will be laid to the Charge of our Tyrants, and those cruel Inquisitors, who taste no such Pleasure as that of pursuing us as wild Beasts: The Day on which they condemn a *Jew* to be burnt, is for them a Day of Joy and Triumph.

THE *Rabbies* who come to *Paris* would have no such Punishment to dread: In this Country, People of a different Religion from the Prince, are not otherwise punished than by Banishment; the worst that can befall them, is an Order from the King to go and keep the *Jansenists* Company (certain Doctors, who want to introduce new Tenets, are thus termed): In *Spain* they would not come so easily off, and perhaps might be treated as cruelly as we are.

I HAVE frequently mentioned the *Chevalier de Maisin* in my preceding Letters; he's extremely useful to me in this Country, without him I could not possibly form distinct Ideas of so many Novelties which I see; this you'll find verified in the following Example.

THOUGH I made no Difficulty of entering into the *Nazarite* Churches, being resolved to examine every Thing with my own Eyes; yet it happened Yesterday that I found myself in one without knowing it: Passing through a pretty retired Street, I came to a large Hall, of which the Door was open, and where the People discoursed with one another freely; I thought it was some publick Hall, and should never have guessed it to have been a Temple. On my Entry, I perceived at-

most the same Things that I had seen at the Academy of Musick; there was only one Row of Tribunes, resembling those in the Opera-Hall, and a considerable Part thereof taken up by Musicians, who played, as I thought, very harmoniously; the Middle of the Edifice was filled with Men and Women, as in the Opera, with this only Difference, that here they were all seated, whereas in the Pit of the Opera there were no Women, but Men who stood upright all the Time: Every body spoke to their Acquaintances, and the Women behaved just as I had seen them do at the Opera, the Men moved to and fro, making use of their Spy-Glasses. As I had not, till now, been in any of their Churches, and as I had not with me my good Friend the *Chevalier de Maisin*, the Sconces, Images, and Pictures, which presented themselves to my Sight, and the Symphony which struck my Ears, did not in the least discover the Mistake I lay under; having, very near the Matter, seen and heard the same Things at the Opera; and, what added to my Confusion, I durst not make my Doubts known to any body about me: I looked every where for a Theatre, but none was to be seen; at last I perceived a little Sort of Tribune fixed to one of the Pillars of the Hall, in which a Man, with a strange antick Sort of a Dress, placed himself: He had put his Shirt above his Coat, and on his Head a black Cap four-corner'd. I made no Doubt but that this was the Actor appointed to open the Piece, and expected every Minute to hear him speak, but he remained for some Time silent, looking round the Assembly, and at last, after some half Dozen Hems, kneeled down, moved his Lips, and stretch'd his Hand from Shoulder to Shoulder, and from Breast to Belly, which made me conclude



clude that this was a Pantomime Shew, and that the Assembly was to have no other Entertainment, at this Time, but such Buffoonry, to which they were extreemly attentive, and seemed to understand perfectly well: Nevertheless, when I least expected it, this Man pronounced, very gravely, a *Latin* Phrase, and thereafter discours'd in *French*, to pretty good Purpose, on the Danger of Plays, by exciting the Passions. I listened with great Attention, but could not conceive why he thus cry'd down his Brethren; it wou'd never have so much as entered into my Thought that this was a Doctor preaching the Law of God: His Gestures, Contorsions, and Transports, the Tones of his Voice high and low by turns, his Air soft and calm for some Minutes, and then wild and furious; all this confirm'd me in my first Opinion.

WHILE I was under this gross Mistake, whom should I perceive but my Friend the *Chevalier* at the other End of the Hall; immediately I brush'd up to him, and begg'd he wou'd tell me where I was. "You're in one of our Churches, said he, and are hearing the Sermon of a fam'd Preacher." You call then, said I, that Man, who makes such a Bustle in the Tribune, a Preacher, and his Discourse a Sermon? But, since it appears to be pretty good, why does he not repeat it plainly, and without Affectation? "What you condemn, said he, is done expressly to give it a better Grace, to make a more vigorous Attack on the Hearts of the Audience, and to enforce his Exhortations." You must be very hard-hearted, replied I, or your Morality very bad, if such Contorsions, Wry-faces, and Howlings, are necessary to excite you to Virtue. During this Conversation, the Preacher ended his Sermon with the same Gri-

maces which he had made at the Beginning, and disappeared through a Hole in the Pillar.

SCARCE had he left off speaking, when the *Chevalier* proposed our going to the *French Comedy*. How! said I, do you so soon forget what the Preacher told you? "This Man, said he, is  
 " paid for crying down Pleasures, 'tis his Trade;  
 " let him bawl out as much as he pleases for a  
 " Living, but let us not be bubbled with vain and  
 " frivolous Fears; he's an Abbot of Fashion, frequents publick Assemblies, and this very Evening  
 " you'll see him at the Play, not that stern rigid  
 " Moralist in a long Cassock, thundering against  
 " the Crimes of the Age, but a lively brisk Spark,  
 " in a Short-cloak, ogling the very Ladies whom  
 " he had but just now frighten'd into Fits with  
 " Hell and Damnation. A new Piece is to be  
 " acted this Evening, and, as the Author is my  
 " Friend, I must appear at it."

I WAITED on the *Chevalier* to the Play-house, which was so full, that we scarce could find Places. As soon as the Actor had repeated some Verses, the House rung with a Clap of Applause; and, at the End of every Scene, the same Noise was renewed, to the great Disturbance of the Audience. When the Play was over, I ask'd, why they did not defer their Approbation till the End of the last Act? "The greatest Part of the Clappers, said he, are either Friends, or hired by  
 " the Author; as there was a formidable Cabal  
 " against him, without a Party superior to his  
 " Enemies, the Piece must have been damn'd." But, since it is exceeding good, replied I, how could it fail of Success? "That's no Reason,  
 " answer'd he, to screen it from Criticism; our  
 " best Theatrical Pieces have met with bad Treatment on their first Appearance, and Time only  
 " has

“ has given some People of Taste Opportunities  
“ of undeceiving the Publick: For one Person  
“ of Understanding who comes to the Play-houſe,  
“ there’s a hundred who have not common Senſe,  
“ and who are led by a Parcel of Sciolists and  
“ Smatterers in Knowledge, conſtant Enemies to  
“ Merit, and to good Things; therefore ſuch  
“ Clappings of Applauſe are neceſſary to ſtiſle  
“ the ſnarling Criticiſms of thoſe modern *Zoilus*’s,  
“ by prepoſſeſſing the Publick with a favourable  
“ Opinion, of what otherwiſe they would have  
“ condemned.”

But, ſaid I, when your Criticks fall foul of an Author, muſt not they have a Foundation to work upon? However apt ſome may be to approve of nothing, what can they ſay to a good Performance?  
“ Why, they’ll ſay — deteſtable! abominable!  
“ ill writ, and ſtuff’d with thread-bare Thoughts!  
“ and, ſhould you deſire them to bring ſome In-  
“ ſtances, you’re directly answer’d with a new  
“ deteſtable! abominable! &c. What can a Man  
“ of Senſe do, but ſhrug up his Shoulders, and  
“ yield to the Torrent of Ignorance?”

The World, my dear *Iſaac*, has ever been the ſame; as, in Ages paſt, ingenious Men were ſpur’d on by a noble Emulation, ſo baſe Envy has fallen to the Lot of mean and ſervile Souls; what has been, is, and will be, while the World laſts; but, as I’m not much in the Humour juſt now of philoſophizing on the different Characters of Men, I’ll conclude this Letter with a merry Adventure that happen’d in *St. Martin* Suburbs: Two young *Mouſquetaires* were ſupping with their Miſtreſſes at a Houſe of no good Fame, the Com-miſſary for that Quarter having got Intelligence, went, eſcorted by his *Gardes de Corps*, to inveſt that unſanctified Place; as their Approaches were  
made

made without Beat of Drum, the Fort was taken without Fire of Gun, and the poor Lovers interrupted by this unexpected and unwelcome Visit. The Magistrate, in Compliance with Form, was obliged to put down, in Writing, every Step and Circumstance of this Expedition; and, while he was scribbling, our Inamorato's held a Council of War, in which it was resolved, that one of them should place himself near the Ladies, and the other blow out the Candle, draw his Sword, and call out, Kill, kill; which was no sooner done, than down drops the Commissary and his Attendants, flat upon their Bellies, to avoid the Swords, which they thought were flying about the Room, such a Pannick were they under: In the mean Time the *Mousquetairs* carried the two Damsels clear off, lock'd the Door behind them, and left the Field of Battle to this valiant Hero, who was long before he recover'd his Spirits.

TAKE care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers load thee with Riches, and grant thee a numerous Posterity.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER V.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

IN my preceding Letters, I have given thee my Thoughts, and Reflections, on the most remarkable Things that I have met with at *Paris*. I expected to have heard from thee e're now, but as yet nothing has appeared, which I am willing to attribute to Want of Opportunity, rather than to Sloath or Laziness.

DON'T



DON'T imagine that I stand in need of thy Letters, for Information of what passes at *Constantinople*; we have distinct Accounts of what happens there, and many other Places, in a printed Paper, publish'd, twice a Week, by one whom they call a News-Monger; this Man keeps a Correspondence with People of all Nations, and, in his Closet, knows all the principal Occurrences in most Parts of the World; 'tis true, he's sometimes imposed upon by his Correspondents, and, in his turn, imposes on the Publick; but when he's sensible of any Mistake, he fairly acknowledges it thereafter.

BESIDES this Paper, we have, handed about, an infinite Number of loose Sheets on Literature, Politicks, and Gallantry, the last of which, as they hit the Taste of the Ladies and the Clergy, are in general Esteem; next to them are those on Learning; but the most ridiculous, are the Productions of certain Politicians, who pretend to dive into the different Interests of Princes. The Emperor has nothing hid from them, and they're the Depositaries of all the *French King's* Secrets: They tell a certain Prince in *Germany*, that such a Treaty is prejudicial to his Interest, and therefore advise him not to sign it; and to another, that it is his Interest to accede: In short, there's not the least Motion made, by any Court, but they know the secret Springs of it. If thou imaginest that the Authors of these political Papers are let into the Secrets of States, or have any Correspondence with the Ministry, thou'rt much mistaken; they move in a very distant Sphere, and have no other Foundation for what they advance, but some frivolous Reasonings, drawn from the Ideas framed in their own Imaginations.

THERE

THERE are also other Performances more considerable than those just now mentioned, some of which appear every third Month, and others but once in six Months, pretty large Books, and go by the Name of Journals; two or three of them deserve a Reading, particularly the one called the *Journal of the Learned*; but as for those that are published for Booksellers, and \* certain *Nazarite* Doctors, I look upon the Authors as Mercenaries hired to promote the Interest of their Employers, in Opposition to others of the same Trade: Every Bookseller has a Journalist in Pay, whose Business is to bestow high Encomiums on the Books published for him, and to criticise what is printed for others; but the † Journalists of these Doctors are, at best, but Transcribers, being tied up by their Masters to write on no Subjects but what are prescribed to them, and strictly enjoin'd to follow the Plan laid down, without the least Variation in Thought or Expression; for which Reason, their Productions are generally despised, and only read by a few who dread their Power, or want their Credit.

A LOOSE ‡ Sheet (published by several Ecclesiasticks, declared Enemies to those Doctors) has so enraged them, that no Cost nor Pains have been spared to find out the Author, but he lies concealed, and happy is it for him, since Racks and Wheels must have been the Consequence of a Discovery. It must be owned, that he deserves an exemplary Punishment, not for writing against Monks and Priests, but for having frequently failed in the Respect due to the Sovereign, the Ministry, and the Nation; which leads me insensibly to the Duty of Subjects to their Princes.

I A P

\* Jesuites.    † The Journalists of *Trévoux*.    ‡ The Ecclesiastical Gazette.

I APPREHEND, my dear *Isaac*, that the Happiness of a People depends on their Submission to the Laws of the State, and to the Orders of those to whom God has committed the Conduct: The Peace and Tranquility of a Kingdom consist in the Harmony and Union of King and People, and the Moment this Concord ceases, all's in Combustion; the natural Consequence of Discord in a State, is, it's Ruin. The *Ottoman* Empire contains within itself, the most cruel of it's Enemies, and, if ever it falls, it must be by it's own proper Strength; the frequent Changes of Vizirs, the Sultans dethroned, and the Janizaries ready to revolt, are so many Fits that rend it's Entrails.

WE must do the *French* this Justice, that they love their Sovereign, and that none of those Catastrophes, so common at *Constantinople*, are to be seen here: When intestine Troubles infest the State, they spring not from the Nobility and Gentry; the Army, or the People; but, what must strangely surprize thee, from the Monks and the Clergy, who are divided into two Parties, as opposite to each other as the Janizaries and Spahis. The Subject of this Division is a Writing, issued out by the Sovereign Pontife, commanding all the *Nazarites* to think, write, and maintain, that tho' he may mistake, he cannot err\*. This Ordinance has given Offence to many, particularly to some Doctors, Mathematicians, who, not finding that the Proofs of this Proposition would bear a Geometrical Demonstration, have appeal'd to a Majority of the inferior Pontives, by whom, contrary to Expectation, they have been condemned, and the Sovereign declared infallible. The dissenting Doctors, highly scandalized at this Decision, resolved not to submit, but were, however,

very

\* The Pope's Infallibility.



very much puzzled to assign a plausible Reason for their Disobedience; at last they bethought themselves of this Expedient, to protest against the Legality of the Decree, in so far as the Opinions of the several Pontives had been given separately, and by each in his own \* Country, and not in a general Assembly, in which only an Affair of this Consequence ought to have been determined. Their † Adversaries exclaim'd against this Proposal, and alledged, that a general Assembly (which could not possibly be convoked) was required with no other View, but to furnish them an Opportunity of supporting their Error; and that it could not be imagin'd, a Man of any Character would change his Opinion to prevent the Trouble of a Journey.

THE Ministry, tired at last with their Disputes, order'd both Parties to be silent, but neither of them obeyed; and, to colour their Disobedience, contrived a comical Expedient, viz. a mutual Accusation of one another as Enemies of the State, and Rebels to their King, so that under the Pretext of Affection and Loyalty to the Prince, they found Means to attack one another more briskly than ever. — *O! rare Priests!* — The profound Peace which the *French*, naturally Lovers of Novelty, enjoy'd, made many take Part in this Quarrel, and the Consequences became dangerous to the State; but War, and the punishing some who would not allow that the Sovereign Pontife spoke Sense while he raved, has much appeased the Divisions.

I CAN'T but think, my dear *Isaac*, that, had I been prime Minister of *France*, I should have foreseen and prevented the Consequences of this Affair. The *Venetians*, whose political Genius thou knowest,

\* Diocess. † The Jesuites.



knowest, often receive such pontifical Writings, but they always put them carefully into a strong Box, made for that Purpose, without so much as bestowing a Look on them: Such a Conduct as this had been prudent in the *French*; but once the Sovereign declared himself in favour of the Bull, and pronounced those Enemies of the State who refused it; Disobedience in the Subjects was an Affront put upon the Honour of the Crown, and became criminal; the Publick Good, the Tranquility and Peace of their native Country, called upon them to comply.

I WOULD not be understood, my dear *Isaac*, as if I granted the King that blind and absolute Power which the Sultans exercise; no, that's not my Sentiment; I would have a King to be the Father of his People, and not the Tyrant: But I do maintain that, for the Happiness of the State, he ought to have a superior Power, and be as much above the People, as the Laws are above him; nay, further — if he should happen to violate them, the Subjects must not take Cognizance of the Crime with an Intention to punish it, but leave that to Heaven. With what Confusions, Disorders, and Divisions are contrary Principles attended? When a State is divided into two Factions, it's impossible for a King to satisfy both; the Malecontents can easily disguise their Rebellion, under the specious Pretext of a Necessity to prevent the Violation of Laws.

WE seldom see in our Books that our Fathers have taken up Arms against the Kings of *Israel*, and that, when they did, God permitted a severe Punishment to befall them and their Leaders; this we see verified in *Abshalom*, whose Fate may serve for an Example to those who are spirited up to Rebellion, which, according to my Sentiments,

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not

not unanswerable I must own, is not, upon any Account whatsoever, to be attempted; but tho' some may differ from me, yet as my Scheme certainly tends to preserve the publick Tranquility, I hope it will meet with thy Approbation, and that's enough to me.

To give thee some Idea of those Papers and Pamphlets handed about here, only imagine to thyself that my Letters had been communicated to some Person, who should have taken it in his Head to polish and transform them into a periodical Work, for the Entertainment of the Publick; they would perhaps have pleased some, and been criticized by others; but certainly must have found, in the Monks, dangerous Enemies; the Freedoms of my Pen would never have been pardoned, and, sooner or latter, the Discovery of their Gallantries would have drawn upon me the terrible Effects of their Revenge; for tho' they lay the People under the Obligation of pardoning Injuries, they know better Things than to subject themselves to such a dull, mean spirited Duty, of which the following Adventure is an Instance.

SOMETIME ago a *Franciscan* Frier, named Father *Placide*, was Confessor to a certain Lady's Waiting-woman; he usually took an Opportunity, when the Lady was gone out, to visit and exhort his Penitent, not in frivolous and trifling Discourses, but in communicating a Secret, by which she might at once have a Fore-taste of the Pleasures she was to meet with in the other World, without being guilty of any Crime, if none other but himself performed what was necessary. *Jeanny* (who set up for a Votary, and who would not, for World's Riches, have been guilty of the least Breach of Duty) could not withstand such persuasive Arguments, but consented, and found herself

self so happy in her impeccable Lover, that no Prince on Earth could have rival'd him. "Fa-ther, said she, one Day, I'm surpriz'd that my Mistress should play the Fool with the *Chevalier D\*\*\*\**, when she might choose one of your Fathers; but perhaps they have not the Power of removing the Sin in married Women." No, said he, as for us private ordinary Monks, our Power is not so extensive; Adultery is a Case within the Jurisdiction, only, of Prelates; and should you at any Time reveal what passes betwixt us, the Indulgence which I have now given would become void, and you guilty of a greivous Sin. Trust to my Discretion, answered *Jeanny*, and fear nothing. For six Months Matters went swimmingly on, till one Day that the holy Man, who had far exceeded his ordinary Instructions, and over-done himself, threw off his Cowl and Frock, in order to refresh a little in *Fresco*, and, if possible, to recover new Spirits for a last Admonition; but his pious Designs were interrupted by my Lady's Arrival, when least expected; the House rung with, *Jeanny*, were are you? But poor *Jeanny* (a Thing not very common) had quite lost the Use of her Tongue! The Lady hearing some Noise in the Chamber, and surpriz'd that the Girl made her no Answer, approached to the Door, and peep'd through the Lock-hole, whence she perceived the defrock'd Monk picking up his Cowl: However surpriz'd at this Sight, she resolved to avoid the giving of Scandal, and therefore only commanded open Doors, or that she would immediatly give Orders to have it broke open. The Friar obey'd, and with an Air of Sanctity, and down-cast Eyes, begg'd the Lady would excuse his Unwillingness to interrupt the Sacrament of Pennance, being at the Absolution when

the Maid was call'd. Father, said she, you shall be under no such Constraint for the future; in the mean time be directly gone, both you and her, out of my House, and never dare to approach it again.

THOU'LT think, my dear *Isaac*, that this Monk ought to have reckon'd himself very happy to have so easily got out of the Scrape; but, full of Revenge for the Affront, he wrote an anonymous Letter to the Lady's Husband, acquainting him of her Intrigue with the *Chevalier D\*\*\*\**, adding many aggravating Circumstances to blacken her Crime. Sometime thereafter it was known that he was the Author of this Letter; but the prudent Lady, unwilling that an Affair of this Nature should come to the Knowledge of the Publick, made no Attempt to get him punished.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER VI.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I DIRECT this Letter for thee at *Paris*, not doubting but that thou'rt arrived there since the Date of thy Letter from *Marseilles*; a Voyage that I was obliged to make to *Rome*, where I still am, has hindered me from acquitting myself of the Commissions which thou gavest me on the Part of *Isaac Onis*; the Moment I return to *Genoa* (where I only remain'd a few Days and in a constant Hurry) I shall obey his Commands, and send, by the same Ship that brought me from *Constantinople*, what he wants. If thou'rt as much surprized at what thou seest in *France*, as I am with what I see here, I make no Doubt but that a Communication



munication of our Remarks and Reflections may be extremely useful to us both.

THIS Town abounds with three Sorts of Folks, Monks, Painters, and Courtezans: A Merchant, a Shoemaker, or a Taylor, are as seldom to be met with in *Rome*, as a Priest, or a Woman of Pleasure in other Countries. The *Nazarene* Doctors of this Place teach the People that there's but one God, whom they look upon as a great King, attended by many Princes and Lords, who compose and add to the Splendor of his Court. The Clergy have the sole Privilege of granting Patents, in the King's Name, to those who are advanced to this high Dignity: As the Purchase of the Patents is extremely dear, and that the Sovereign Pontife finds his Account in the Sale, numerous Promotions are made from time to time, which, in the *Nazarene* Language, are called *Canonizing*, or *Sainting*: Each Brief costs a hundred thousand Crowns, and those, whose Heirs can advance such a Sum, are directly received into the first Order; but those, whose Families are poor, must rest satisfied with what they call *Beatification*: The first may be compared to Dukes, and the last to Marquess's, all noble, but different in Dignities; so that if thou and I, my dear *Aaron*, should die *Nazarenes*, whatever Esteem we might have acquired during Life, we could have no Pretensions but to the Rank of Marquess in *Paradise*.

IN Politicks the *Romans* yield to none; and in Covetousness, their darling Sin, exceed all; every Thing is improved to the best Advantage; and they who have the Art of Selling, to so good Account, the Honours and Dignities of the other World, judge what they must make of Posts and Places here.

I OBSERVE a remarkable Resemblance betwixt the Government of *Rome* and *Constantinople*; the Moment a Grand Vizir is made Prime Minister, his Predecessor's Creatures are all kick'd out, and their Posts given to those who can come down most; 'tis just so here; when a Pontife expires, his Nephews lose their Credit, and their Posts the Moment that a Successor is chosen, and his Relations have got hold of the Reins of Government. A Vizir squeezes Presents from the *Bashaws*, they from the Governors of Towns, and these rob and distress the People: A sovereign Pontife taxes his Subalterns, they the inferior Clergy, and these make the People pay even to the very Spot of Ground where they are interr'd; but, to run the Parallel still a little further, when the Grand Seignior wants Money, a curious Hair-Ring, of his own making \*, is sent to the *Bashaw* of *Cairo*, who knows the Meaning of this Present, and forthwith pays the Price: The Pontife, in place of a Ring, or a Bow, sends a Writing to all his Subalterns, by which every *Nazarene*, paying a certain Sum, may have a Dispensation on some Point of Religion, such as keeping of Lent, and fasting, or marrying a Relation within the Degrees of Consanguinity; but as this seldom happens, it's taxed at a high Rate: Besides these, there are several other Things, whose Prices are left to the Generosity of Purchasers, and which are all comprehended under the Title of Alms.

To give new Life and Vigor to the *Nazarene* Charities, the Pontife, now and then, opens the Gates of Heaven: In former Times this was only done once in a hundred Years, but now that Mens Lives are shorten'd, the Doors are laid open once in twenty-five Years, and sometimes sooner, if a  
good

\* All the Sultans learn Trades.

good Occasion offers: I would not have thee, however, to imagine that Heaven is so barricaded at other times, as to render it inaccessible; this is not the Case; only the Passage is straiter, and the Imposts of Entry higher: During the Jubile, or plenary Indulgence, *Paradise* is a free Fair, and while this Liberty subsists, the Revenue of Customs sinks considerably, but as soon as it's over, the Duties and Tolls are put upon the old Footing.

I WENT t'other Day to visit St. *Peter's* Temple, and must own that I was strangely surpriz'd with the Grandeur, Magnificence, and Regularity, of this noble Edifice; it's Splendor made me call to mind the famous Temple of *Jerusalem*, of which we read the Description in our Books: As I was going about viewing the many Beauties in Architecture and Painting, &c. I perceived five or six \*Priests, sitting in little wooden Centry-Boxes, and, with long Rods, touching every Person who came and kneel'd down within their Reach: Having inquired what was intended by this Ceremony, I was told, that those Priests were the Grand Penitentiaries, impower'd to pardon all Sins, but as it was impossible for them to receive the Confessions of such Crowds of People from all Nations, a gentle Stroke of this sanctified Rod on the Head had the Effect of an Absolve, and cleans'd the Soul of all it's Filth. — Strange, ridiculous Ceremony! but ---- Mum's the Word.

When I left St. *Peter's* Temple, I went into another, not far distant, where I was accosted by two Men with a Dish, into which they desired I would put something for the Relief of † *Monsieur St. Jacques*; as I always loved to assist the Miserable, I put my Hand in my Pocket, and gave them

\* The grand Penitentiaries. † Saint *James*.



them a *Testoon*: When I had got into the Street, I ask'd a Friend, who was along with me, if the Person who beg'd Charity was himself in Distress, or if it was for some other afflicted Person? He laugh'd heartily at my Question, and told me, that this *Monsieur St. Jacques*, represented to be under Difficulties, was a Saint, who wanted nothing, being dead more than sixteen hundred Years ago. Why then ask they Charity for him, said I? The Priests who minister in his Temple, replied he, are his Servants, and he who helps them, obliges the Master. I conceived directly that this was one of the Priests Tricks to get Money; and I doubt not but that they have a great many more, which thou may expect to know, if I can but discover them.

THIS Temple of *St. James* was formerly but a little private Chaple, and was built upon Account of a Miracle. When they were about the finishing of *St. Peter's Church*, all the Pillars and Chapters that were brought to adorn this famous Building, passed before *St. James's Door*; for a Time he bore with their Neglect of him, expecting that when that Church was finish'd, they would think of providing him with a better Lodging; but finding that he was still forgot, he resolved to punish their Neglect, by taking at his own Hand, and by his own proper Authority, what they had no Mind to give him; accordingly, one Day, as a Couple of Carts, loaded with two fine granate Pillars, were driving to *St. Peter's Temple*, the Saint finding them very fit for his Purpose, resolved to make free with them; and therefore, when the Carriages were pretty near to the Door of his little Lodge, by a Power which Saints, it seems, are possessed of, the Horses were enervated, and could draw no further; the Carter, who



who was not let into the Secret, made the Street ring with the Clacks of his Whip, and swore like a Dragoon, but all to no Purpose, for stir they would not: It was concluded, that the Horses were tired, six more were brought and put to the Carts, but still no stirring: In short, the Number was augmented to the Tune of a hundred for each Cart, but one Step they would not move: Some one or other, who had more Wit, and saw further than his Neighbours, told them, that this strange Stupefaction must proceed from a super-natural Cause, and that he verily believed St. *James* had a Hand in it, which might be easily known, by trying if the Horses would draw to the Door of his Chaple: This Proposal was agreed to; and, to put the Miracle, if any such there was, out of all Doubt, two Horses were only left in each Cart, who, on the first Clack of the Whip, went off at a full Trot and stopp'd at the Saint's Door. — A Miracle! a Miracle! rung thro' the Streets of *Rome*: The old Chaple was pulled down, a new Temple built, and you may be sure the said Pillars conspicuously placed; and, to commemorate this miraculous Event, the People christen'd the Church, \* *San Giacomo Scoffa* — *Cavallo*.

PRITHEE tell me if thou seest or hearest of Things in *France* as absurd as what I now write thee! How happy are we, my dear *Monceca*, to be born *Jews*! Such Chimera's can find no Place in our Minds; and, with whatever Vail, Imposture, and Illusion may cover themselves, we can see through the Cheat, and laugh at the pretended Miracle!

MAY

\* There's not a *Roman* who makes the least Doubt of the Truth of this Miracle, upon which Account the Church has retained the Name of *Chiesa di san Giacomo Scoffa* — *Cavallo*.

MAY the God of *Israel* bless thee with all the Comforts of Life.

*Rome, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER VII.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

THY Letter, my dear *Jacob*, is come to hand ; and as thou'rt more exact in answering Letters than *Isaac Onis*, from whom I have not as yet heard, thy Diligence deserves my Acknowledgment. What thou see'st at *Rome* must, no doubt, be as surprizing as what I observe at *Paris* ; things so new, and unknown to us both, that one would think he was transported into another World ! thy Surprize however ought to be less than mine, as thy Father was of *Genoa*, and thou brought up in the *Nazarene* Countries, till thou attained at thy tenth Year, tho' at that Age thou went'st to *Constantinople*, and has not, till now, stirr'd from it, yet still there must remain some confus'd Idea of what thou hast seen in thy Infancy.

I READ with Pleasure what thou writ'st on the *Romish* Superstitions ; we have daily Instances in this Country of the Excesses into which they drive the People, and at this very Moment there are, perhaps, in *Paris*, two thousand Persons who are so affected with Vapours, and commit such Extravagancies, that one would think they were possess'd by some evil Spirit ; yet this wild Enthusiasm is look'd upon, by many, as the Effect of a divine Inspiration, tho', in reality, it may be attributed to an Order from the sovereign Pontife, which

which has turned their Heads — Here's the Matter of Fact.

THOU hast, no doubt, heard at *Rome* of a certain Constitution, which makes a great Noise in *France*. A Priest\*, who had gone in with the Opposition which it met with in this Kingdom, tho' he was but an obscure and unknown Person while he lived, yet after his Death acquired a wonderful Reputation: Some of the Opponents took it in their Heads to grant him one of those Briefs which thou sayest the Pope alone can dispose of, and by which a Man is admitted to be a Member of the heavenly Court: As they had no Hopes that the sovereign Pontife would ever give Consent to his Instalment, it was resolved he should perform such surpizing Things, that the People, by their own Authority, should grant him that Dignity; and, to effectuate this, they had Recourse to Miracles, the best Means to make an Impression on the Minds of the Vulgar; but then they wisely considered that the Operations of their deceased Brother, performed in a genteel gay Manner, and with the Pageantry of a publick Shew, would be much more relished by the People, and have a better Effect, than if they happened in a plain, simple Manner; upon which Account they resolved to give their new Saint a Power of curing those who applied to him, by Dancing and Singing. A certain Abbot †, after long Practise in private, was the first who open'd the Ball on the Saint's Tomb with a Dance, in which there was a masterly Step, called the Sommerfet, or Top over Tail, vastly taking with the People, and really vastly well performed: One of his Legs was fourteen Inches shorter than the other, and he pretended, that in every

\* Monsieur Paris. † The Convulsions of the Abbot Becheran on the Abbot Paris's Tomb.

every three Months it lengthen'd a Line; upon which a Mathematician calculated, that fifty-five Years capering would complete the Cure. The People crowded to see this new Shew, and were so delighted with it, that many of them fell a dancing themselves; and their Number so encreased, that they far exceeded all the Rope-dancers in the Kingdom. Those of the opposite Party solicited the *French* and *Italian* Players to petition the Parliament against those Interlopers, so prejudicial to the Play-houses; but whether they were gain'd over to the other Side, or that they did not incline to hinder their new Brethren from picking up a Living, I won't determine, but they made no Complaints.

IN the Interim, the King, displeased at this Dancing, order'd the Door of their \* Hall to be wall'd up, and themselves to be severely punish'd, if they continued their Exercises: Not daring, after this, to dance in Publick, every one retir'd to his own Home, shut his Doors, and practis'd privately; but as the Number of those Dancers was greatly increas'd, and that their Jumpings, accompany'd with savage, wild Airs, sung with a strong Voice, made a terrible Noise, the Prelates (who had been revelling the best Part of the Night) being disturb'd too early in the Morning, obtain'd an Order to have those who were in their Neighbourhood taken up, and carried Prisoners to the Castle of *Vincennes*, where there were above three hundred inclosed; and thou may judge what strange Chiming was among them, when they began to sing and cross-caper. Some of them, wearied with Confinement, promised to renounce Musick and Dancing, and were releas'd; others remain'd, and continued their Exercises; and there's still above

two

\* The Church-yard in which the pretended Saint is buried.



two Thousand at *Paris*, who have not been taken up.

It must be owned, my dear *Brito*, that those who thus deceive this People, easily seduced, deserve rigorous Punishments, and I can't but admire the *French King's* Clemency; at *Constantinople* such Tumblers would have directly been impaled for their Caperings. It would seem to me that it's the Fate of the People to be constantly bubbled by Men of turbulent Spirits; they easily give into the Snares laid for them, and no sooner get out of one, but their caught in another.

A FRIEND of mine told me a comical Adventure concerning a Woman's Simplicity, of which he was an Eye-witness. In a provincial Town, named *Dole*, a \* Priest, belonging to a Society, intirely opposite to the Dancers, just now mentioned, was interr'd: Some time before his Decease, he had been accused of making a Girl mad, in order to debauch her; and the Affair being brought before a supream Tribunal, he was acquitted. His Enemies alledged, that Interest had brought him off; but, as for my Part, after due Examination of the Circumstances, I concluded that it was a Trick put upon him by the Capriollers, to whom he was a declared Enemy. The Society, extreamly concerned that such a clamorous Prosecution should have been made against one of their Brethren, to repair, after his Death, the Injury he had done them while alive, resolved to have him canonized as a first rate Saint: Their Credit with the sovereign Pontife, made the Thing easy, but a Miracle was necessary, to remove the Prejudices which the People had conceived against him.

F

A Wo-

\* Father Girard, Jesuite,

A WOMAN, who had lost her Eye-sight, some Months ago, burnt Wax-tapers and Incense, in Honour of all the Saints above, but none of them was so complaisant as to restore it; they were all deaf to her Prayers, and the good Woman lost both her Time and her Presents: Her Confessor advised her to perform a nine Days Devotion at the deceased Father's Tomb, who, by the Persecutions he had suffered, deserved to be in the highest Rank of the Blessed. The blind Woman consented, and would have address'd *Mahomet*, on the Prospect of Relief the ninth Day: When she was putting up her Prayers on the Tomb of the Demi-Saint, the Rays of the Sun struck upon her Eyes, through one of the Church Windows; and, as she had still some faint Glimmerings of Light, in broad Day, but not so much as to distinguish Objects; these Rays, thus reflected, made her fancy that she perceived a whitish Light, upon which she called out, I see; a Miracle! a Miracle! and by the first Impulse of Joy, marching four or five Steps rashly, and without a Leader, she beat her Head against a Pillar, and raised a Bunch upon her Brow, which proved a fatal Blow to the new Saint's Reputation, having obliged his Friends to delay the Expedition of the Brief which he was to have had. This Adventure has very much discredited certain little Bits of his Habit, which the People had cut off when he was buried, and preserved as Relicks.

I DOUBT, my dear *Brito*, if Superstition can go a greater Length in the Country where thou art; won't thou allow that the Caperers of *Paris* are equivalent to *St. James* and his Pillars? The People are every where equally credulous: Thou'rt not a Stranger to the servile Respect paid by the *Mahometans* to their Santons and Dervises; and we  
our-

## JEWISH LETTERS.

ourselves, I must confess, give, sometimes, too credulously into the Notions of our Rabbies: Some time or other, I shall write thee my Thoughts on this Head; mean time, let me beg the God of our Fathers to grant thee Health and Wealth.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER VIII.

AARON MONCEGA to ISAAC ONIS.

EVERY Day gives me new Opportunities of admiring the *French* King's Power; and I have now no Difficulty of believing what some Merchants of *Pera* said, when they asserted, that their Prince was capable to execute Enterprizes so far above the Grand Seignior's Reach, that he durst not so much as think of them. Three Things are the *primum Mobile*, or principal Springs, of his Grandeur; the Love of his Subjects; the Subjection of the Nobles, whom the Kings his Predecessors had humbled and impoverished; and the happy Situation of his Country extremely peopled. As I was extolling to the *Chevalier de Maisin*, the flourishing State of this Kingdom, " You see, said he, but the Remains of our Grandeur, our Destruction proceeds from ourselves, and intestine Divisions have done what our Enemies could not have accomplished.

" ABOUT two hundred Years ago, our Divines were divided amongst themselves, concerning certain Points of Religion; the Court declared for one Party, and many of the Nobility and People for the other; for some Time

" it went no further than simple Disputing, but,  
 " by Degrees, Envy and Hatred crept in: The  
 " Court was offended that there should be Persons  
 " in the Kingdom of different Sentiments from  
 " them, and the King commanded his Subjects to  
 " conform; nothing is so dangerous as to force  
 " the Consciences, of which we have, but too of-  
 " ten, seen the fatal Consequences: Those whom  
 " they called Innovators, refused to submit, pre-  
 " tending, that their Fidelity to the Prince, did not  
 " require they should abandon some essential Points  
 " of Religion; and this Refusal furnished their  
 " Adversaries with a Pretext for Persecution; a  
 " great many were put to Death, and several very  
 " honest People burnt; and, what is surprizing,  
 " Persecution rather augmented, than diminished  
 " the Number; their Party, by the Conjunction  
 " of some Princes of the Blood Royal, who headed  
 " them, became formidable; and, during the Reign  
 " of two or three Kings, there was nothing but  
 " mutual Destruction: At last the Court got the  
 " better, and all the Innovators were banished the  
 " Kingdom: The Government chose rather to lose  
 " a fourth Part of the Subjects, and to see their  
 " Gold and Manufactures transported into Fo-  
 " reign Countries, than to suffer them to pray in  
 " *French*, or to eat Mutton on a *Saturday*. When  
 " the Nation was cleared of those Disturbers, it  
 " was expected that the publick Tranquility would  
 " soon be restored; but scarce were these Out-  
 " laws gone off the Stage, when new Innova-  
 " tors appeared, and in such Numbers, that if  
 " Recourse should be had to the same Remedy,  
 " as in the former Case, the Kingdom would soon  
 " be like a Man, whom too frequent Bleedings  
 " had render'd hectick."



## JEWISH LETTERS.

53

MY dear *Isaac*, does it not appear, that the God of our Fathers revenges us on the *Nazarenes* and Infidels? If he permits that ~~we~~ we should be under Captivity, and bear the Yoke of our fierce Tyrants, he pours on them a Spirit of Giddiness and Perversion, to shew us, by their Errors, the Truth of that Law which God himself gave to *Moses*.

I KNOW not if thou ever hast reflected on the reciprocal Persecutions of the *Nazarenes*, among themselves; for my Part, I always looked upon them as a visible Punishment of their Injustices to us: That Inquisition which thirsts for the Blood of *Israel*, and whose Horrors have even affected our most cruel Enemies, has it not lost the united Provinces to *Spain*? and these very Provinces, who received our Brethren into their Bosom, and gave them an Asyle, are they not become the Depositories of all the Riches of the Universe, and Protectors of the Oppressed?

CONSIDER, my dear *Isaac*, the Conduct of God's People, compared with that of the *Nazarenes*; when the ten Tribes separated themselves, we did all that was possible to bring them back to the right Road; but did we, under deceitful Promises, draw them into the Temple, with an Intention to sacrifice them as Victims? Was there ever a *Levite* who thought the Death of a *Sadducee* necessary to make him High Priest? Does God require that we should shed the Blood of our Brethren? and does he not in express Terms forbid it by the Commandment of his Law?

I HAVE observed that, amongst Infidels, their Desire of making new Converts, is pushed even to Madness; the *Mahometans*, and *Nazarenes*, are at infinite Pains about this; and having, in vain, employed Threats, Promises, and Tortures, to

gain us, discouraged at last from further Attempts, they attack one another.

THE *Nazarenes* have among them religious \* Soldiers, who make a solemn Vow to sacrifice, to the Glory of God, as many *Turks* as possible; and these, in revenge, have made it a Point of their Law, to pay them back in their own Coin. Is not this a pretty Way of enlightening the Mind, and touching the Heart? and is it not a very comical Faith that is founded on Fear, and which only believes, because it dares not disbelieve? The lightest Difficulty, the smallest Dispute, arms these Infidels, who for the least contested Point, murder and butcher one another; and when this is out of Doors, another starts up. The *Greeks*, at *Constantinople*, hate the *Mahometans* less than the *Romans*; and there's not a Merchant at *Pera*, but who would turn *Turk* sooner than what he calls *Shismatick*. Thou knowest the Antipathy betwixt *Turks* and *Persians*, and the Divisions of the Sects of *Omar* and *Aly*: I consider *Mahometanism* and *Nazarism*, as two great Towers, resembling that of *Babel*, and which perpetually produce a Heap of Disputes, and clashing Ideas.

THE *Nazarenes* reproach us with the very Thing that adds to the Glory of our holy Law, they pretend that our being dispersed through the Universe, is a Mark of Reprobation; but that Unity of Faith and Doctrine † which we have preserved, that Simplicity in the essential Points of our Religion, on which neither Time, nor our Misfortunes, or the Difference of Climates, have been able to work a Change; are not they visible

Proofs

\* Knights of *Malta*.

† By the Unity of Faith and Doctrine, *Aaron Montceea* understands the essential Points of the *Jewish* Religion; and it's upon this Account that he takes no Notice of the different Sentiments of the *Jews* in *Germany*, *Portugal*, *Asia*, and *Africa*,

Proofs of the Grandeur and Truth of our holy Law? Confusion, Disorder, and Change, are the Portion of human Inventions; Stability and Constancy the Marks of the Finger of God.

WRITE to me, my dear *Isaac*, if thou think'st my Reflections just, for I'm in a Country where I dare not communicate my Ideas, but so far as they are necessary in the Questions which I want to be resolved on, and in such a Manner, as Curiosity, natural in Strangers, may render them excusable.

I WAS Yesterday at the Interment of a *Nazarene*; the Ceremonies of it appeared as new to me, as those which I had seen in their Church; a great many Monks marched two and two, singing some doleful Air; they were dress'd in different Manners, and different Colours; some were cloath'd in Grey, wore a long Beard, and had wooden Sandals, for Shoes; others were in Black and White, without Beards; and last of all came those dress'd in Green: All these Monks were form'd into different Brigades; according to their Uniforms, or Liveries; at the Head of each Troop, a Standard, like a Cross, was carried, and pretty much resembling the Colours of the *Bashaws*, excepting that there was no Horse Tail: The first Priests, who formed the Van-guard, were followed by others, covered with a Sort of Cloak, not unlike the *Arabian* Shepherds Hoods, and the Train of their Robes held up by Men behind; each of them had a long Flambeau in his Hand, and seem'd to be the Lancers of the Main-Army, modelled into a hollow Square; about the Corpse, which was carried by four Men: A Crowd of People, dressed in Black, and at their Head, a Man covered, from Head to Foot, with black Crape, closed the March, and composed the Rear-guard  
of

of the Army: Curiosity ingaging me to see the End of this extraordinary Ceremony, I followed the funeral Pomp: When we arrived at the Church, the Corpse was placed in the Middle of several Flambeaus; the Priest surrounded, and sung a Farewel to him; but, as I was at a Distance, I could not distinctly hear the Words; as far as I could guess, they wished him good Rest, and that his Sight might be long preserved\*: Before they let him down into the Vault, they examined, by Way of Precaution, if he had only been in a fainting Fit: A young Man brought a Pot full of Water †, and every one of the Priests threw a little of it on his Face, and having given no Signs of Life, he was let down into his Grave, and the Whole concluded with a farewel Song. As I can't penetrate into the Reasons of this Ceremony, I must inform myself, if the *Nazarenes* believe, that the Deceased, in the other World, are metamorphosed into Children, and that a Ba-baby-ba, lulls them a-sleep. We are accused with having too many Ceremonies in our Religion; is't possible to find any more ridiculous, or in greater Number, than those amongst the *Nazarenes*? What can one think to see People singing at the Grave of a dead Man! I know no greater Folly, but to dance at it.

TAKE care of thy self, my dear *Isaac*, and thank God that he has made his Law known to thee.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*

## LETTER

\* *Aaron Monteca* alludes to those Words, in the Office for the Dead, *Dona eis requiem, & lux perpetua luceat eis.*

† Holy Water thrown by the Priests on the Dead, to chase away the evil Spirits,





## LETTER IX.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

A CAPTAIN of a Ship, who arrived here Yesterday, has brought me four of thy Letters, and I suppose our Correspondent at *Marseilles* could find no Occasion, till now, of sending them.

I MADE no Doubt of thy Surprise at the Novelties which thou seest; my Case was the same with thine, when I first went from *Constantinople* to *Vienna*; brought up in the *Levantine* Customs and Manners, every Thing that differed from them, seemed extraordinary to me: I laughed heartily at thy Mistake about the Opera Girls and the Sermon: I have communicated thy Letters to *Osman* Bashaw\*, who approves of the Judgment thou hast given of the present State of Sciences and Learning in *France*; and thy Reflections on our Religion, has occasioned a sharp and comical Dispute betwixt his Secretary and me; he's a young Man who turn'd *Mahometan* about three Years ago, formerly a Monk, but, tired with *Nazarism*, threw by the Cowl, and took the Turban; the Bashaw, finding he had a Genius, receiv'd him into his Service; he pretended to prove, that the *Mahometan* Religion was the best, and that it contained *Judaism* such as it was when God gave the Tables to *Moses*: I was surpris'd to see him so zealous for *Mahomet*, and thought that he was just such a *Turk* as he had been a *Nazarene*; as his Arguments, in disputing, had diverted *Osman*, he

\* Count Bonneval.

he ordered him to put them down in Writing, that he might consider them at Leisure: I send thee a Copy of his Memorial, and, prejudice a Part, let me know thy Sentiments.

*Memorial of HALY, Secretary to OSMAN Bashaw, formerly Count BONNEVAL.*

" WE *Mussulmen* have the same Ceremonies,  
 " and the same Belief in all essential Points, as  
 " ye *Jews*; one only God, the Immortality of  
 " the Soul, the Punishment of the Wicked, the  
 " Recompence of the Just, Circumcision, Hor-  
 " ror of Images, strict Observation of the Sab-  
 " bath, and our Mosques, as your Synagogues,  
 " unsullied with Idols; when we fast, we eat  
 " nothing till after Sun-set; we respect the Me-  
 " mory of *Moses* and the Prophets, we have a  
 " Veneration for *Jerusalem*, and we abstain from  
 " forbidden Fleashes: Is not this the ancient *Ju-*  
 " *daism* in every Point, the Faith of *Israel* in it's  
 " fullest Light, and such as it was in *David's*  
 " Time?

" Let us now examine which have been most  
 " liable to Changes and Additions, you or we.

" One of the two Grievances, with which you  
 " reproach us, consists in the Worship that we pay  
 " the *Messiah* \*; but why would you have us deny  
 " his being come, of which there are so many evi-  
 " dent Proofs? How will you reconcile that eter-  
 " nal Expectation of yours with *Danial's* Weeks?  
 " You have lost your Memorial-Book, and, fa-  
 " tigued with making so many useless Supputa-  
 " tions, you thought it was better to call it a  
 " Mystery, which you cou'd by no Means con-  
 " ceive

\* The *Turks* look upon the *Messiah* as a great Prophet, and even respect his Apostles.

“ ceive: You slip your Necks out of the Collar,  
“ in the same Manner, in the Explication of that  
“ Prophecy, in which it is so clearly said, That  
“ the Scepter shall not depart from *Juda*, until  
“ he come who should come. I know that you  
“ cavil on the Word *Scepter*, and substitute in it’s  
“ Place, *Rod of Tributation*; and, by this Means,  
“ set a wrong Gloss upon that Passage to sup-  
“ port your Cause; yet, notwithstanding the Ob-  
“ scurities your *Rabbies* have endeavoured to throw  
“ over the Prophets, you know that one of your  
“ most famous Doctors, when he was dying, as-  
“ sembled his Family, and told them the following  
“ Words, *I’m very much afraid, my dear Children,*  
“ *that Jesus of Nazareth, whom our Fathers cru-*  
“ *cified, was the Messiah*; with that he expired:  
“ And whatsoever Care has been taken to con-  
“ ceal his Doubts from the World, yet the Se-  
“ cret came abroad.

“ But, after all, let us suppose, for a Moment,  
“ that we deceive ourselves in believing that the  
“ *Messiah* is come; what essential Changes, pray,  
“ would this make in the main Points of true  
“ *Judaism*? None at all; the same Ceremonies,  
“ the same fundamental Points, which were the  
“ Foundations of *Israel’s* Law, when *Jerusalem*  
“ was in it’s Glory, are conformable to our O-  
“ pinions, what we stedfastly believe, and what  
“ you yourself have but just now acknowledg’d.  
“ What can there be amiss in honouring a Pro-  
“ phet, a great Man, a Law-giver, whose Mora-  
“ lity is so beautiful, and so useful to Society?  
“ If he has taught us to add something to the an-  
“ cient *Judaism*, his Sentiments are so pure, that  
“ it may be easily seen they come from Heaven;  
“ and if *Moses* did not inspire the ancient *Jews*  
“ with such, it may be attributed to the Hardness  
“ of

“ of their Hearts, which render'd them incapable.  
 “ On our Part then, no other Changes have been  
 “ introduced into the old Religion, but those of  
 “ improving its Morals, and of rendering to him  
 “ that taught us, by his Preaching and Practice,  
 “ the Glory that was due; not pushing Things  
 “ to Extremities, as the Christians, who have de-  
 “ rogated entirely from *Judaism*, but only refin-  
 “ ing on some Parts of it.

“ Another Reproach thrown upon us, is, our  
 “ profound Veneration for *Mahomet*; for what  
 “ Reason should we be debarr'd from honouring  
 “ God's Envoy, he who, after *Moses* and *Jesus*,  
 “ is come to bring Light into the World, and to  
 “ perfect the Law of God, whose Favourite he is?

“ Let us now see if you have not made more  
 “ considerable Changes; in the first Place, by your  
 “ Dispersion, you have failed in the most neces-  
 “ sary Points of the Law; you have discontinu'd  
 “ Circumcision in *Spain*, though no Considera-  
 “ tion of Danger ought to have made you dis-  
 “ pense with such an essential Ceremony: For  
 “ a certain Time you sacrificed Children in *France*,  
 “ whom you bought for that Purpose; and, con-  
 “ trary to the Will of God, sprinkled the Altars  
 “ erected for him with human Blood, tho' it was  
 “ expressly forbid that you should sacrifice but in  
 “ *Jerusalem*; but, not to mention all the whim-  
 “ sical Notions and Chimera's of your Doctors,  
 “ where have you found in the ancient Books,  
 “ that you were forbid to cut your Bread with  
 “ certain Knives, or to drink Wine but what  
 “ you had squeezed yourselves? In what Passage  
 “ of *Genesis*, *Deuteronomy*, or the Psalms of *David*,  
 “ have you read that impious Principle, that it is  
 “ an Article of Religion to deceive all who are  
 “ of a different Communion? I know, that pub-  
 “ lickly



“lickly you disown such Sentiments as these, and  
 “the Reason is obvious, because People would  
 “be more upon their Guard, and you would find  
 “more Difficulty to perform the Functions of  
 “your *Judaism*; from all which I think it must  
 “be acknowledged, that you have only the Name,  
 “and the *Mussulmen* the Religion of the ancient  
 “*Jews*.”

THOU’LT easily find out, my dear *Monceca*, the weak Side of this Reasoning, and the Sophistries with which it is stuff’d, but I must acknowledge, that I find something new and singular in the Thoughts. Many have branded us with Errors; but none hitherto have attempted to prove that the *Mahometans* were the true *Jews* under another Name. I wish this singular Story may afford thee the same Pleasure which thy Letters give me; every Passage in them calls back to my Memory what I have seen in *Germany*, which abounds no less than *France* with Beaus, gallantish Women, and hypocritical Monks, &c. When we examine Mankind in general, we find they resemble one another; Difference of Climate makes no Change on the Hearts, it only dresses them after the Mode of the Country: *Cupid* is as busy at *Constantinople* as at *Paris*; and our *Turkish* Ladies are as much under his, and his Mother’s Influence, as your *French* Dames, but in a different Manner: Here, Silence is the Life of an Intrigue; all is lost on the least Indiscretion; so that Necessity, not Inclination, bridles the Lover’s Tongue: Different Customs exempt a *Frenchman* from such extraordinary Precautions; and, if he blabs out the Favours bestowed on him by the Fair Sex, it is because he knows that his Indiscretion can be attended with no dangerous Consequences; and a *Turk* would perhaps be as indiscreet, did not his

Interest restrain him: Your beautiful Airs, your foppish Affectations, and polite Extravagancies, are not unknown in *Turky*; they present themselves, 'tis true, under other Forms, but are, upon the Main, the same; Feathers, laced Cloaths, Spying-Glasses, Canes, and Snuff-Boxes, are metamorphosed, here, into \* Chelibis, Turbans, garnish'd with fine Muslin, Perfume-Boxes, genteel little Pocket-Books, for Love-Verses, and magnificent Pipes. Dress, in all Countries, is the Foible of the Women; to charm a Lover who has gained their Affection, all their Invention is on the Rack; and they have naturally Courage enough to attempt any thing that may gain their Ends; there's only some small Difference in the Methods of pursuing them. In *France* and *Germany* a Waiting-woman is her Lady's Confident; carries Billets-Doux, and helps her to c——l the Husband: Here, an Eunuch is the *Mercury*; a Discovery is Matter of Laughter to the *Frenchman*, or he bears his Fate with Patience; but a *Turk* runs stark-staring mad; the greater Fool he! for what can't be cur'd, must be endur'd. In short, the Monks, whose Actions astonish thee, are exactly copied here in their Avarice, Impostures, Hypocrisy, Laziness, and Unserviceableness to the State, so that *Nazarene* Monk and *Mahometan* Dervis may join Hands.

If my Letters are dilatory, attribute it to the Scarcity of Shipping, and not to any Fault in me.

*Constantinople, \*\*\*\*\**

LETTER

\* The Dress of a young *Turkish* Lord.



## LETTER X.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE People here carry through the Streets, on some Occasions, certain grotesk Idols, which they call *Saint Shrines*, escorted in the same Manner as the Dead to their Graves, with this only Difference, that the Bearers are not dress'd in Black: These Pagods have certain Days appointed for their Ambulations through the Course of the Year, and they must not inroach upon one anothers Privileges: Whatever Inclination an Idol may have for an Airing, and to visit the Streets, there's no stirring abroad, but on the Holy-day appointed for its Appearance; till then due Care is taken to keep it shut up; and it never comes out of its Case, but by the Permission of Church-Wardens.

EVERY one of these Shrines have their particular Jurisdctions in the Government of Nature; the Winds obey one, another commands the Seas, and a third renders the Earth fertile; but the Mistress of all is, she who commands the Rain; she's first in Rank, and has Permission to take the Air oftner than the rest. There's still a great many more of an inferior Class, for sore Eyes, Tooth-aches, Gouts, Plagues, Voyages, and Journies; Enterprizes, Trades, and finding out Things stolen or lost; and they have the same Attributes as the \*Lares, or Penate Gods of the Ancients. The firm Belief in which the People are, with respect to those Shrines, has set a natural Philosopher to

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work

\* Household Gods;

work about a new System; by their Help, he has found Means to explain all the Secrets of Nature; and, as this Philosophy is perfectly suitable to the Monks, no doubt but they will promote it.

I HAVE already informed thee of several Things, with respect to the Learned of this Country, but I could not enter into a particular Detail; as I am now acquainted with some of them, I'm better able to satisfy thy Curiosity.

THE Literati of *Paris* may be divided, as the *Greeks* did their Gods, in Gods and Demi-Gods: The Sciolists swarm in *France*; every body pretends to Knowledge; 'tis the Foible of the Nation; and they'd rather be reputed Rogues, than Block-heads: Such there are who, very indifferent about a scandalous Character, as to their Manners, would be under the greatest Concern, should any imagine that they could not explain the Riddles of the *Mercury*, or compose a Madrigal.

THE Women too, in this Country, set up for Criticks, on Performances of Wit and Humour; and, what is very particular, their Decisions are ordinarily better than the Mens; they have a certain natural Delicacy, which, not being tainted with ill-digested Studies, renders their Taste more exquisite, and truer, than that of our demi-learned Men. For these fifteen or twenty Years past, the Men of Genius and Letters, who lived under the Reign of *Louis XIV*, have had no Successors: It would seem that Nature had taken Care, in those Days, to form a Number of great and learned Men, in all Manner of Arts and Sciences, that every Thing might answer to the Grandeur of this Monarch.

THERE are, however, still Men illustrious for Learning, and who, deservedly, are to be placed  
in



in the first Class: The oldest\* is an excellent Philosopher, in his Youth a good Poet, in riper Age an able Critick, and a profound natural Philosopher: Would'st thou believe that, endued with such rare Talents, he should have been guilty of an egregious Blunder, out of Vanity, or Weakness; such as the abandoning of his Fraternity the Learned, and constituting himself Chief of raw School-Boys, and Abortives of *Parnassus*? He prostituted his Pen in Defence of their trifling Productions; and the Publick saw, with Astonishment, such a Man, as he, defend so bad a Cause. The Case was to prove the Moderns superior to the Ancients: However chimerical that Enterprize might be, perhaps, in handling the Matter with that Exactness, and Neutrality it required, there would not have been such an Inequality, as some imagine; but they pushed this ridiculous Dispute to the extravagant Length of calling *Homer* a Dotard, *Demosthenes* a Brawler, and *Virgil* a Poetaster! they pretended to teach them their own Languages! branded them with low Expressions, and unpolish'd Terms! and a Man, born on the Banks of the River *Seine*,\* pretended, three thousand Years after *Homer's* Death, to instruct him in the Choice of Words, and Delicacy of *Greek* Expressions! What I look'd upon to be most singular, in this Dispute, was the Difference of the Adversaries: All the truly Learned, of the first Order, rank'd themselves upon the Side of the Ancients, and acknowledg'd, that it was to their Productions they owed what they knew; and that those who set up in Opposition against them, were a Reproach to Literature, and the Excrement of *Belles Lettres*; and indeed they were very soon silenced. Under this Confusion they made their

G 3

Addressee

\* *M. Fontenelle*

Addressees to the learned Gentleman mentioned above, and offered to acknowledge him for their Master: The flattering Idea of being the Chief of a Party prevail'd; and, with a great deal of Wit, he defended a very bad Cause.

It's very probable that he'll soon turn his Weapons against them; for, on a Death-bed, the *Nazarenes* are obliged to confess all the Lies they have been guilty of during the Course of their Lives; and, as he is very far advanced in Age, it will not belong, I suppose, e're he endeavours to efface (by an authentick Reparation to those worthy Authors whom he has criticised) the only Blemish with which his Glory has been stain'd.

THAT Custom among the *Nazarenes* of revealing their Actions to the Priests, makes them Depositories of all the Secrets of Families: The sovereign Pontife, placed on his Throne in the Middle of *Rome*, may know the Thoughts and Actions not only of a *European* and *African*, but also of an *Indian Nazarene*; and tho' he will not, perhaps, give himself the Trouble to descend to Particulars, yet still he may when he pleases; and to establish, by a perpetual Proof, his Authority of searching into the secret Recesses of our Hearts, he has reserved to himself, throughout all Christendom, the Cognisance of certain Crimes, which he alone can pardon; such as beating a Monk, or writing against him, &c. these are Cases only absolvable by his Holiness; and, were I a *Nazarene*, this Letter would cost me a Journey to *Italy*; but for assassinating half a Dozen Men, and robbing a Dozen of Families, Confession to the first Monk that I met with, and a little of the never-failing Argument, make me as white as Snow: Were I rich, they would, perhaps, oblige me to make some pious Foundation; but then I should have some Drubbings

Drubbings into the Bargain, without being accountable for them at our next Clearance. This Absolution, the peculiar Privilege of Priests, is to them the Mines of *Pern* and *Potosé*; they look upon it as Land which, duly manured, affords them all the Necessaries of Life: The Revenues are collected thrice a Year, on the Days of their three principal Festivals; and, by special Favour, young Lords and Court Ladies are to pay only once a Year; but they must take Care not to transgress: There are, however, many Frauds committed; and such there have been who, at the Point of Death, confessed that for twenty or thirty Years they had been constant Smugglers. Of all People, the Beaus and the Learned are most apt to elude the Tax; many of the former make Satisfaction only at the last Extremity, when they're packing up for the other World; and most of the latter take their Journey without clearing Accounts, for which the Monks fail not to exclaim most heartily against them. To prevent such Abuses as far as possible, they have made a Concordate with evil Angels, by which these oblige themselves to seize upon all those who have not paid the Taxes before Death; and, that none may pretend Ignorance, due Care has been taken to render the Treaty publick, and to refresh Peoples Memories from time to time: But as this Alliance, contracted with infernal Spirits, had so struck some *Nazarenes*, that, tho' they had discharged their Consciences as to the Taxes, they were still afraid to die, lest the tricking Dæmons should find a Hole in their Coats; to calm such Apprehensions and Fears, some Doctors fell upon a Contrivance of furnishing them with proper Discharges, which might serve as Passes, and prevent all Molestation on the Road: Tho' the Fees exacted on these Sort of Cocketts are but  
a Trifle,



a Trifle, yet, as none would venture to set out without them, a very large yearly Revenue arises from that Branch. These Pass-ports are in Imitation, I suppose, of a Practice among the superstitious *Turks*, of having a certain Sentence of the *Alcoran* put into their Coffins, which they imagine their Prophet takes very kindly.

WHAT Folly, my dear *Isaac*, what Blindness! We can have no other Pass-ports after Death, but our good Actions; and an upright innocent Conscience can only give us a noble Assurance when we are setting out on that Journey: When a Man has lived innocently, why afraid of Death, which puts an End to all our Troubles? shall unfortunate Pilgrims, the Sport of Passions, and exposed to all the Rigours of Chance and Fortune, be concerned at the Loss of Life, which, in it's best, is but a mournful Scene, and, in it's worst, an Emblem of Hell? Did not Heaven forbid all Attempts upon our Persons, I should have approved of the Custom observed by certain Towns in *Pompey's* Time, where it was permitted, in the Case of unsupportable Misfortunes, to require Poison, kept on purpose in the Republick, and under the Management of the Magistrates, who were to determine if the Misfortunes complain'd of were intitled to the publick Remedy: But as Man sees only thorough the Vail of his Passions, and is always influenced by them, their Decrees could scarce be strictly equitable; for a Judge, under Disappointments in Love, would readily grant the Poison to one who wanted to die for the Loss of a Mistress; a Gamester, to one who had lost his Money, preferably to all others; and the ambitious Man, to a disgraced Courtier; and, it is my Opinion, that these Judges, who were Strangers to the Passions of the Petitioners, granted their  
Requests



Requests more by way of Favour, than from a Perswasion of real Necessity.

The Post is going, and I have only Time to wish thee Health and Increase of Prosperity.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XI.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I CONTINUE to examine the Beauties of *Rome*, and, with an astonishing Pleasure, consider the Remains of the *Roman* Grandeur. I went Yesterday to view the Capitol, on the Ruins of which a modern Palace is built, according to a Plan of *Michael Angelo's*, the famous Architect: From the Consideration of this curious Structure, I was led into a vast Field of Reflections: Should *Marinus*, *Sylla*, *Cesar*, *Sertorius*, and *Pompey*, said I, within myself, return into the World, and be transported to *Rome*, without any previous Knowledge of the Changes, how would they be surprized to find their Places in the Capitol possess'd by a Dozen *Monsignors*, the ancient Senators metamorphosed into Abbots, and the Order of Knights changed into the Badge of Monks? In Place of *Lictors* and *Fasces*, which preceded, and followed the *Roman* Consuls, a Prelate, attended by a Troop of Footmen, or some Cardinal strutting in \* *Fioco*! What's become of the Legions would they say? Are they incamped about *Rome*? They would straight repair to the Field of *Mars*, where nothing's to be found but Briars and Serpents:

Ah,

\* In Ceremony,

Ah, *Romans*! would they cry out, what's become of your Love for Glory? What have ye done with that martial Ardour which made you Masters of the World? The People at this Discourse would stare and laugh at their Folly. Should they ask to visit the *Arsenals*, to know the State of the *Armouries*, and the publick Expende, they would be led into the Library of the *Vatican*, and there shewed the Bulls of Excommunication already gone out, and others ready to take Wing upon the first Occasion. Should they desire to verify the Finances, the Funds which produce them, and the Methods taken to raise the Subsidies, immediately Coffers full of Indulgencies, Bulls, and Nominations to Benefices, would be thrown open. Did their Curiosity extend to know what Recompences are bestowed on Citizens who distinguish themselves, and what Statues are erected for them, they would shew them Chaplets \*, *Agnus's* †, and Reliquaries ‡, all blessed by the Pope. Should they inform themselves about the triumphal Crowns, Mitres and Cardinals Caps would be presented. Ask they to see the Kings of *Armenia*, *Bithinia*, *Pontus*, and many other Sovereigns, who made their Court assiduously to the meanest of the Senators, in pops the Pretender, with his two Sons. And if their Curiosity extended to know what Princes they had vanquished, a Relation of the Murder of *Henry IV.* and of his Predecessor, would be the Answer to that Question.

THINK'ST thou, my dear *Aaron*, that these illustrious Men, full of the Grandeur and Heroism of their native Country, could be less surpriz'd at this Abasement, and Decadency, than we are at  
the

\* Chaplets of Beads. † Pieces of Wax blessed by the Pope, having the Print of a Lamb, or some other holy Hieroglyphick. ‡ Shrines for Relicks,

the Novelties which we see? to be sure it cannot be; and I doubt not but *Cæsar* would have more Difficulty to find any Thing of the ancient *Roman*, in an *Italian*, than thou would'st have to unriddle the most perplex'd Ceremony of *Nazarism*.

THE Arrival of the Carnival, has given new Life to the Diversions of this Town; I went Yesterday to the Opera, where none but Men perform'd; and was told, as a Reason of this Singularity, that, in the holy City, it was not proper Singing-Women should appear on the Stage: Strange Delicacy! when it consists with every body's Knowledge, that there's two or three hundred Courtezans, in two Streets of *Rome*, not indeed Tributaries to the Pontife, as commonly reported, but tolerated, and even protected by the Governor: Prithee tell me which of the two ought to give most Offence to the holy City, a Couple of Singing-Girls (whose Behaviour is generally speaking regular enough in this Country) or three hundred Houses of Debauchery? The Expedient of substituting Men in their Places, depriv'd, for the Sake of a fine Pipe, of the Means to propagate the Species, is a Crime, in my Judgment, barbarous to the last Degree, and which *Turks* would never have thought of, or suffered, were they not over-rul'd by the Jealousy of their Tempers, which neither Reason nor Philosophy can withstand; but still there's something more excusable in the Motive of their Barbarity, than in that of the *Romans*; among whom, a Father, on the base Prospect of Gain, renders a Son incapable, at his Birth, to perpetuate his Family; and thrusts him into a Species different from either of the two Sexes, and the Contempt of both! It's inconceivable how such a Custom came to be introduced, or tolerated; and one would think that  
Men

Men are miserable enough, by the Ills to which Nature subjects them, without being themselves the Occasion of new Misfortunes.

THE *Nazarenes* have a Fundamental Law, by which Eunuchs are excluded from Ecclesiastical Dignities and Honours; nevertheless, an Expedient has been found out by the Pontife, to soften it's Rigour: As it's not in his Power to repair the Damage done by the Operation, he permits those who carry on their Breasts, in a leather Purse, the melancholly Relicks of their Shame, to be received into the Order of Priesthood. In many other Cases, as well as this, the Pontives have found out comical Methods of eluding the Laws, made by their Predecessors, without coming to an open Violation, which would affect their Infallibility; for should one abrogate what his Predecessor had enacted, there would be no further Certainty in their Decisions, nor no further Obligation of believing that Black is White, if the Pontife should be mistaken in Colours. A very wag-gish Paper, handed about here by *Nazarenes*, who have shaken off the Pontife's Supremacy, and pretended to reform several Abuses, in many Points of the *Romish* Religion, may not be improperly inserted in this Place; which, if true, is a heavy Draw-back on the Doctrines of Infallibility; and, if otherwise, betrays Want of Integrity in the opposite Party, to which soever of the two Sides the Scale may turn, the Profit is ours.

Debtor



*Contraria juxta se posita clarius elucescunt :*

Or, the infalliable Popes contradicting one another in Matters of Faith.

## DEBTOR.

**P**OPE Gregory XII. affirms, that the Church of *Rome* is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches; and declares it to be an Article, necessary to Salvation, to believe her so to be.

Pope *Celestinus* III. says, that the Pope of *Rome* is the Vicar of Christ, and has supreme Power over all the Bishops of the Church; and that, without Subjection to him, there is no Salvation.

*Boniface* II. and *Felix* III. affirm, that *Tobias*, *Judith*, and *Maccabees*, are as much the holy Scripture, as *Genesis*, and the Writings of the four Evangelists; and declare, *ex Cathedra*, that whosoever does not acknowledge them so to be, is accursed.

*Gelasius* II. *Sergius* III. and *Benedict* VII. affirm, that Scripture alone is not the Rule of Salvation; and, that Traditions, and the Declarations of the Popes, are to be received with the like Regard and Veneration as the Scriptures.

*Honorius* III. and *Celestinus* IV. say, that the Scripture is not  
to

## CREDITOR.

**P**OPE *Pius* II. says, in his Epistles, that it's a most pious and probable Opinion, that all the Churches of the Christian World are Sisters to that of *Rome*, who can pretend no Authority over them.

Pope Gregory I. declares, that it is the Pride of *Lucifer* not to be endured for one Bishop to set himself over the rest, and to pretend to have all the rest in Subjection to him.

Pope *Calixtus* the *Roman*, and Gregory I. say, that tho' *Tobias*, *Judith*, and *Maccabees*, were read by some Christians, yet they were not received by the Church as canonical Scriptures; and the latter, in his Morals, quoting the *Maccabees*, excuses himself for producing a Testimony out of a Book not received by the Church.

The Popes *Anterus*, *Zephyrinus*, and Gregory I. declare, that all Things necessary to Salvation are contain'd in the holy Scriptures, and that from thence every body may learn whatsoever is necessary to Salvation.

Gregory IX. and *Alexander* V. declare, that it's expedient  
H ent

## DEBTOR.

to be read in the vulgar Tongue, or by the ignorant, because more Prejudice than Profit will redound to them from it.

*Leo X.* and *Julius II.* say, that after this Life there is a Purgatory, where the Souls of those that die in venial Sin, and are not purged by the Sacrifice of the Mass, or by the Indulgencies of the Pope, are to give Satisfaction for their Sins.

*Paul* and *Julius III.* affirm, that Images are not only to be placed in Temples, but are also to be worshipped, as if the Persons thereby represented were present.

*Paul IV.* and *Pius V.* forbid, under the Pain of Excommunication, the Laity to receive under both Kinds.

## CREDITOR.

ent for all Men to read the Scriptures.

*Adrian III.* confesses, that there is no Mention of Purgatory in Scripture, or in the Writings of the holy Fathers, and therefore we may conclude, that at the Hour of Death, either the good or evil Spirit seizeth upon the Soul, and keeps it for ever without any Change.

*Gregory I.* *Celestinus III.* and *Urban VI.* do professedly forbid the Worship of Images.

*Gelasius*, and with him *Benedict II.* and *John V.* declare, that, in the Sacrament, the Substance or Nature of Bread ceaseth not; and that consequently our Bodies, as well as our Souls, are nourish'd by the Eucharist; and they declare further, that everybody should receive the whole Sacrament of Bread and Wine, and not the Bread alone, for the dividing one and the same Sacrament is a great Sacrilege.

THOU must be sensible, my dear *Monceca*, that having never had an Opportunity of reading the Writings of the Pontives, I cannot possibly vouch for the Truth of this Account stated in the mercantile Way, and ballanced in every Point to a Tittle; I shall only tell thee, that a certain Priest who

who had made these Excerptions, with no good Design I presume, was, as the Story goes, betrayed by some Persons he confided in, and delivered up to a certain Cardinal, who had an Eye to St. *Peter's* Chair, which is enough to let thee know that the poor Priest made a quick Exit to the other World, without a Pass-port, and was exposed to all the infernal Pirates and Guarda Costas. But to end this Digression let me now pursue the Thread of my Story, which broke off, I think, at the Honours paid by the *Nazarenes* to the Pontife, equal to those render'd to the Divinity, such as prostrating themselves at his Feet, and respectfully kissing his Slipper; a Ceremony which the greatest of the *Nazarene* Kings are not excus'd from, and look upon as an Honour.

WHEN a Pontife is chosen, he is seated on the Altar of the great Temple, where the People assemble, kneel down, adore him, and beg that he may bestow on them the good Things of this World, and secure their Happiness in the next: Their Requests are granted; and, by a certain Motion of two Fingers extended, the Sins are remitted; the World becomes vertuous, and Nature puts on a new Face. Thus, in old Times, the *Jupiter* of the *Pagans* moved *Olympus* with a Glance. After the Benediction, he is carried back in Triumph to his Palace; and, to complete the Happiness of the *Romans*, nothing remains but that he should speedily die! Strange Paradox this! that the Interest of the People should require the Destruction of him who made them but just now happy! To unriddle this Mystery, thou must know, that every Election of a Pope brings a vast Concourse of Strangers to the City; makes Changes in the Ministry, and in publick Employments; opens a Scene agreeable to every body, except the Relations of the Deceas'd, who are the only

Lofers. As the High-Priest never marries, and consequently can have no lawful Children, his whole Views are on the Promotion of his Nephews, and nearest of Kin; and the Favour they enjoy during his Papacy, is called Nepotisme, often push'd to a greater Length than Despotisme at *Constantinople*; for it has been more than once seen, that a Pope's Favourite has committed greater Robberies, he alone, in three Years, than twenty Vizirs in fifty; by which it would appear that the *Romans*, in wishing for a Change of Popes, know not their own Interest; since it must be easier to satisfy the Avarice of one, who, after he was glutted, would discontinue his Robberies, than to be the Prey of thirty Tyrants succeeding to one another in a short Space of Time.

To make Amends for the Ills occasioned by Nepotisme, the High-Priests have assumed an absolute Command over the Seasons, the Elements, and the Fruits of the Earth; by this Means they make Restitution to the People, or, at least, make them think so, of what their Relations and Favourite take from them.

SOME Time ago, Swarms of Caterpillars destroyed the Trees to such a Degree, that the People were, at last, forced to have Recourse to the sovereign Pontife, who promised to exterminate them; but as he was not cock-sure if they would be so civil as to burst at his Desire, several Pretexts were given for delaying till the cold Season was approaching, which no sooner came, then out goes an Excommunication, with a Sentence of Death, ordaining them to be their own Executioners, to which, with the Help of five or six Days Frost, they all obey'd. The People cry'd out, Miracle! The Shrines were carried in Triumph thro' the Streets, and the Monks were well rewarded for their Prayers upon this Occasion.

SOME



SOME Time afterwards a Subaltern Pontife \*, who wanted to imitate his Sovereign, was not so successful: Grass-hoppers destroyed the Country; he excommunicated them for three Years successively, but being, it seems, of Janseniste Race, they appeal'd from the Sentence, and could not be persuaded to die till their own Time.

FAREWELL, my dear *Monceca*; may thy Riches surpass thy Desires.

*Rome, \*\*\*\*\**

\* Bishop of *Arles*.



## LETTER XII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I WAS yesterday conducted, by the *Chevalier de Farfin*, to an Assembly of Ladies, and *Petits-Maitres*, where I had an Opportunity of making Remarks on the Falshood of Women, and Treachery of Men: As I enter'd, a Countess, to whom every one pretended Friendship, was under Examination, and unmercifully ridiculed.

I would fain know, said a young Lady, where in the World the Countess picks up all the Old-womens Tales, with which she sets us a-sleep! Truly, Dotage, at her Age, is not to be bore with. "Your Pardon, Madam, replied a *Petit-Maitre*, with a whining Affectation; if "old Age gives a Title to Dotage, the Countess "was qualified more than a Year ago." You're waggish, replied another Lady! I know the Countess, she can't be in the doating Age, having been married only the same Year that I was born; she was not above twenty-four then, and I'm now

thirty-two. "How, Madam! cries out a certain  
 "silly Fop, with an Air of Surprise, you thirty-  
 "two Years old! No! no! your Looks contra-  
 "dict your Words, which are as surprizing as it  
 "is incredible that the Countess does not exceed  
 "fifty-six, tho' she allows only of forty."

WHEN the Assembly were thus settling the  
 Countess's Birth, who should come in but her  
 very Ladyship? and all was hush. Good God,  
 Madam, said she, who had but a Moment before  
 bestowed so liberally upon her fifty-six Years, how  
 charming you look To-day! Your Complexion's  
 more fresh and lively than Roses and the Lillies!  
 In short, one would almost swear that you were  
 not thirty Years old! I am more tho', reply'd the  
 Countess, smiling gently, turning the Eyes me-  
 thodically, and biting the Lip, to give it a Ver-  
 million: I slept so ill last Night, continued she,  
 that I was frighten'd this Morning when I look'd  
 into my Glass; truly I had put on a Resolution  
 not to shew my Face this Day; and nothing less  
 than the Pleasure of seeing this good Company  
 could have tempted me to come abroad. We  
 should have been at an infinite Loss, replied the  
*Petit-Maitre*, who had taken her to Pieces but a  
 little before, for none, Madam, is so capable of  
 diffusing an universal Gaiety in an Assembly as  
 your Ladyship; and, I protest, upon my Honour,  
 that I prefer one of the little Stories which you  
 are pleased sometimes to tell us to the best of *Be-  
 cace*, or *Fontaine's* Tales.

WHAT I heard astonish'd me! such Diffimu-  
 lation could not proceed but from Treachery of  
 the deepest Dye; I could by no Means approve  
 of ridiculing a Person with whom they entertain'd  
 a daily Correspondence, and to whom they gave  
 the Title of Friend; but the preposterous Praises  
 lavished on the same Person, put me out of all  
 Patience,

Patience, since it plainly appeared they were Injuries so much the more outrageous, in that they were ironically spoke, and understood to be so by every one present, except the unfortunate Lady who was the Subject.

I COULD not hinder myself, the Moment I was got out of this Assembly, from expressing the Surprise I was under: If all the People whom you frequent, said I to the *Chevalier*, have so large a Share of Dissimulation, I pity you: How can you credit what you hear? What Assurance can you have but the Company we have left are this very Minute tearing you to Pieces, as they did that Countess? They swore Friendship to her, as they do to you; but on Hearts, where so much Deceit and Falshood are harbour'd, who can depend? "I know, answered the *Chevalier*, what I have  
"to trust to, and the World too well to be bubbled by vain Protestations and Praises, meer  
"Words of course, and without Foundation: I  
"conform myself to Custom and Mode; I often  
"praise what I think ridiculous, and reckon it  
"my Privilege to make such Extravagancies the  
"Subject of Diversion and Derision when Occasion offers." But pray let me ask you to what Purpose this Disguise? why perpetually contradict the Sentiments of your Heart, and speak what you don't think? Sure, Sincerity must be a Virtue unknown to you; or, at least, of so small Account, that, upon Occasion, you think it's no Crime to lay it aside. "Such is our Manner of  
"Living in this Country, said he; Dissimulation  
"is the strongest Band of Society: As every Man's  
"Experience teaches him that it's not in our Power  
"to love sincerely all those whom we frequent,  
"Truth gives way to Artifice, cordial Love to  
"Politeness, and Necessity makes this Substitution necessary."

BEHOLD,

BEHOLD, my dear *Isaac*, one of the principal Causes of that Politeness so much boasted of among the *French*; this Qualification on which they value themselves so highly, is intirely owing to Want of Candour and Sincerity; their Compliments, courteous Reception, and fawning Conversation, are Consequences of their Diffimulation; and a Philosopher ought to look upon their Praises as a Poison infused into a palatable Liquor.

To please superficially all whom they meet, is a Man's principal Business in this Country; he makes a handsome Bow to one, says some pretty Thing to another, and gets a third in his Arms, with whom he has but a slender Acquaintance: One would think that every *Frenchman* was a *Titus*, who counted the Day lost on which he had not made some one or other happy; but put we them to the Touch-Stone, by diving into their Characters, the Vizard drops, the Mine springs, and all the Counterfeit appears: Such a Man is no Rarity here, who, tho' he has been a constant Panegyriste of another for ten Years, yet, to gratify a satyrical Humour, jumps at an Opportunity of striking at his Reputation: The *French* Genius has a Turn to Slander; it's the Bias of the Nation; some will sacrifice a Friend, rather than lose a Jest; and there's few Friendships in this Country Proof against a Flash of Wit; so see we very rarely Persons to whom we can impart our Troubles, or trust with our Secrets; and, if true Friends are rare every where, they are much more so in *France*.

THIS critical and back-biting Spirit of the *French* Nation, throws a terrible Constraint over all their Actions; they know that all their Motions are strictly examined by those severe Controllers and Criticks, so that in all publick Places their Gestures, Manner of Walking, Laughing, Speech,



Speech, and, more than all, their Dress must be according to the strictest Rules of Mode and Fashion, or they're lampoon'd and pointed at: Dress indeed is the peculiar Province of the Fair Sex; no General, in a Council of War, deliberates with more Attention on the Success of a Battle, than a coquetish Lady, surrounded by her Attire-Women, on the Gracefulness of her Robe and Head-dress; the Success of a Patch, placed at a Corner of the Eye, to make it more lively, or near the Lip, to give it a brisker Red, is a Matter of highest Concern; and twenty Looking-Glasses are consulted, before a Resolution is finally fixed upon: All these Set-offs have Names, which express their Qualities and Uses; the Eye-Patch, for Example, is titled the *Assasin*.

A WOMAN would not think it half so great a Hardship to be confined a close Prisoner at Home for ten Years, as to appear in the *Tuilleries* out of Dress (the Garden of the Royal Palace is thus called; and, being a most charming Place, is much frequented in the fine Seasons) here all the *Petits-Maitres* and Beaus rendezvous, examine, and criticise all who come to the publick Walks: I can't conceive what the President \*\*\*\*\*'s Lady means, says one, but truly she ought not to have brought the Abbot \*\*\*\*\* along with her to the *Tuilleries*, let her have him all Day long at Home, or at any private Place she pleases, I consent, but to lead him in Triumph to these Walks, 'tis downright affronting the Publick. And why should she not do it? answered another, there's the Marchioness and the *Chevalier* together; it's not eight Days since she was separated from her Husband, but she laughs at Tittle-tattle, and minds her Business.

SLANDER is the sole Occupation of the greatest Part of those who come to this Garden; but there's  
another

another \*, frequented by Persons of a different Character, News-mongers, who interests themselves in the Affairs of all the *European* Princes: One assures that he knows, from a good Hand, *Thamas Kouli-Kan* will enter into no Negotiation with the *Porte*; another protests that he makes no doubt but he will; a third discourses upon the Preliminaries of Peace betwixt the *Emperor* and *France*, and offers to lay a Wager of a hundred Pistols that the War will be renewed next Spring; an old Officer pretends that *France*, not being in a Condition to carry on the War, will be forced to make Peace, and adduces as a Proof the Difference in the Bravery of the Troops now-a-days, compared to what they were in his Time; and maintains that whoever has not seen *Turenne*, can have no Courage; the Siege of *Philipsburgh*, a little poultry Town, draws heavy Sighs from him; and the Invalids are the only Corps, in his Opinion, that the King can depend upon.

THERE'S a third Garden †, less frequented now, than in the late Regent's Time; here *Cupid* and the *Graces* had fixed their Abode, and few Days passed without some Adventure prejudicial to the Honour of Husbands; that War ceased not betwixt the God of Love and Hymen, the following merry Story is a Proof: Several private Gentlemen have back Entries from their Houses into this Garden: A certain Lover had concealed himself in a retir'd Thicket, where he expected his Mistress, who had made an Appointment to meet him there, and was as good as her Word; for after Supper she told her Husband that she inclined, for the Benefit of the cool Air, to take a few Turns in the Garden; he consented the more readily, because he had an Affair of the same Nature upon his Hands in the same Place: A little after his

\* *Luxembourg.*

† *Duke of Orlean's Garden.*

his Wife was gone, he went to meet with his *Dol-cinia*, and, by a Contrivance of the malicious little God, the Place he chose to quench his Flame was very near to where his Wife was lavishing her Favours; he could hear some thing that pass'd on her Side, and she perceiv'd that her Neighbours, whoever they were, lost no time in frivolous Discourse. Two or three Persons, who were walking in the Garden, came, as ill Luck would have it, to the very Spot where this double Scene was acting, and forced the two Couple to change Places. Judge of their Surprize, when the Lovers perceiv'd that the Case was Tit for Tat, each Man's Wife being the other Man's Mistress. On their first Surprize and Concern, they could not contain themselves so well, but that some People, who listened without being seen, penetrated into the Adventure, and made it publick the very next Day. The unfortunate Husbands thought it was the wisest Course to dissemble their Resentment, and to make themselves easy upon the Footing of Retaliation.

THERE's a Report here that *Osman* Bashaw\* is dead; let me know the Truth of this, and the Particularities of this extraordinary Man. Adieu.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

\* Formerly Count *Bonneval*.



## LETTER XIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

SOME time ago I went to visit the publick Libraries, of which there are several at *Paris*, and Manuscripts in them that deserve the Curiosity of the Learned: On certain Days of the Week they are open, and whoever pleases may go and have



have the Use, for some Hours, of what Books he thinks fit; the Library-keepers are present, who shew the Passages that People may have Occasion to look into, and take Care that none of the Books be carried away. Nothing can be more commodious for the Studious, than to have the Use of so many Books, which, for several Ages, have cost so much Pains and Expence to collect.

IN these Libraries you find all Sorts of Books, even those which the *Nazarenes* look upon as prohibited; this renders the Collection more complete and useful; for many famous Works, and worthy to be transmitted down to latest Posterity, are forbid amongst them: If a Book treats of Philosophy, it's examined by the Monks, and if any Thing of the System contain'd in it displeases them, it's directly condemned, and the Copies suppressed: If it treats of Politicks, it must still be more reserved, because that regards the Ministry; and even History it self must not be writ with that Liberty which it would require: It's dangerous for the Living not to espouse the Party of the Deceas'd; and an Historian is obliged to palliate many Transactions in precedent Reigns, upon Account of the Interest which powerful Families, as well as Societies, numerous and in Authority, may have in them.

AN Historian who would faithfully relate what has happen'd since *Henry III.* to this Day, would be obliged to choose betwixt the Pleasure of telling Truth; and the Grief of being banished his native Country; he must fly to foreign Countries for an Asyle against the Persecution which he would draw upon himself: Certain Monks \* would by no means pardon a faithful Account of *Henry III's* Murder †; others ‡ would employ their

\* Dominicans, or White Friars. † This enormous Crime was comitted by *James Clement*, Dominican Friar. ‡ The Jesuits. Credit



Credit to revenge an exact Description of Father *Guignard's* \* Crime; and all of them wou'd join their Forces together, were they accused of being indirectly the Authors of *Henry IV's* Assassination, by their seditious Sermons, their defamatory Libels, and villanous Declamations while the League subsisted.

THE Authors who relate these Facts cannot altogether disguise them; but then they endeavour to soften them, as their Interest directs, or as Constraint obliges.

SOME Time ago a Monk †, who had writ several Histories, and lay under the Imputation of having falsified many Facts, took it in his Head, in order to retrieve his Reputation, to write, according to the strictest Truth, the Disputes of some sovereign Pontives ‡; the Moment his Book appeared it was condemned at *Rome*: The *Nazarene* Pontife was extremely concerned that any should have dared to disturb his Predecessors Manes; and thought that their Disorders were a Mystery, into which no private Man was to penetrate. By his Order the Monk was thrown out of his Convent, and not only punished for writing Truth, but also lost the Favours and Recompences which his former Lies had procured §.

THE Prohibition of Books is the worst Way that can be thought of to suppress them; the Moment a Book is forbid, every body wants to buy it; the Booksellers raise the Price, and it sells at a dearer Rate than before: Some have come to a tenth Edition; of which, without the Prohibition of Magistrates and Pontives, scarce two hundred Copies, of a first Impression, could have been sold.

I

What

\* A Jesuit concerned in the Murder of *Henry IV.* † *Maimbourg*, Jesuit. ‡ The Western Schism. § The Pope had wrote a congratulatory Letter to *Maimbourg*, on his History of the *Greek Schism*.

What still adds to the Credit of these prohibited Books, is their Curiosity and Usefulness, and that they're fit for People of Knowledge and Learning; whereas those that are allowed, and publickly sold, are little better than Romances and Novels, proper for silly Women, and certain Abbots; a Man of Genius choos'ing rather to be silent, than to write against his Sentiments.

I HAVE already mentioned some of the Learned in this Country; and I now know several others; one \* of them has just now publish'd a political Work, and tho' he has a great Deal of Fire, Wit, and good Sense, yet he has given into false Ideas, partly by Constraint, and partly by Partiality and Prejudice; the Hopes<sup>\*</sup> of Recompence have induced him to support, by new Writings, the Absurdities of the former: By his System he makes the People not only Slaves, but also takes from them the Consolation of laying their Grievances before the Throne, or even the small Comfort of revealing them to those who are capable to get them redressed; but, in all Subjects where he could write freely, good Sense appears in every Stroke; and, Flattery aside, his Book is a complete Work.

THERE'S another Author †, whose Stile is lively and urgent, a brilliant Genius, but not profound; his Performances are agreeable *Nothings*, if we may call *Nothings* what pleases without instructing.

A RELIGIOUS ‡ has given us, some Years ago, a History of *France*, written with Exactness, and even Sincerity, to the Reign of *Francis I.* about that Time his Sincerity began to be eclipsed, and in the succeeding Reigns intirely disappeared.

ANOTHER Author § has been under no Constraint in a History which he has given us of several

\* The Abbot St. Pierre seems to disapprove of the Parliament's having a Right to remonstrate. † Fontaine, ‡ Father Daniel, Jesuit. § Mr. Rollin.

ral ancient People; this Work may be call'd a Master-piece, being writ with the greatest Exactness, and so much the more Sincerity and Freedom, that there were no Jesuits among the *Medes*, and that the Court has no Concern in the Affairs that happened under *Philip* of *Macedonia*, or *Alexander* his Son.

A YOUNG Man\* has writ Comedies and Novels moving enough, but his Stile is bombastick and starched, a certain precise Air, deviating from Nature, is diffused through his Writings, so that when one reads his Performances, it would seem that the Author invents, and that the Fop writes.

THE Son† of a famous Poet compos'd, some time ago, a Satyr intitled *L'ecumoir* ‡, on the Disorders and Troubles occasioned by the Disputes betwixt the *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, more malicious than witty; he soon felt the Effects of the Enemies which he had drawn upon himself, and it was with no small Pains that he got himself screen'd from their Revenge.

THE *French* have naturally a lively and penetrating Genius; and were they at Liberty to let it take its Flight, no People would push their Reflections so far as they: The Pretensions of the *English* to a Superiority of Justness in Reasoning are vain, they have only the Advantage that their Imagination is unconfin'd, and may act at Freedom, without being under a Necessity of reducing it to Principles, constant Enemies to Truth. How is it possible to examine a Matter to the Bottom, if we're stopp'd every now and then, and must find Means to reconcile Reason to Chimeras, and Truth to Falshood?

WE ought to look upon't as a Thing very surprising, that, in this Country, there should be so many People of a vast and elevated Genius, since

\* Mr. Marivaux. † Crebillon, the Son. ‡ The Skimmer.

all that's possible is done to confine them within a certain Sphere, that they may not soar too high: The Method of educating Youth tends rather to fill their Heads with chimerical and confused Ideas, than to instruct them in the exact and just Way of Reasoning: The Monks, who have the Charge of their Education, and who instil their own Principles into them, take Care to put them on a wrong Method of Studying. A Youth at his ninth or tenth Year is put to College, and by the stiff and dry Manner of teaching the Sciences, he abhors them; and conceives a Disgust at good Authors, by the Methods taken to explain their Thoughts: They speak of *Gassendi*, *Des Cartes*, and *Newton*, as Men so, so: There's scarce a Regent of Philosophy, who does not think himself superior to any of those great Men, and who does not put a greater Value on his Sheets, than on the Works of *Mallebranche*. There's a Society of Monks \* who teach the *Belles-Lettres* with tollerable Success, but are such Enemies to good Philosophy, that they are become its Persecutors.

THE most famous of these Colleges is that which is called *Sorbonne*; it's the most ancient, and has several others under its Direction: In Ages past its Reputation was considerable, but for more than a hundred Years the first Lustre has been declining; the Decisions †, in the Time of the League, the favouring Crimes and Murder, Rebellion and Impiety, committed under the Cloke of

\* The Jesuits.

† In the Year 1589, the *Sorbonne* had the Insolence to issue out a bloody Decree against *Henry III.* it was none of her Fault, but that the Crown pass'd to the House of *Guise*, or became the Booty of *Spaniards*, whom the Rebellion, cover'd with the Cloke of Religion, drew into the Heart of *France*.

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*Sapius olim  
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.*

Lucret. de rerum Nat. Libr. 1. Vers. 84.



of Religion, brought Contempt upon it: In the Sequel it made some Attempts to recover its ancient Glory, but could not succeed; the Majority of the Members carried it against a few, who were for supporting their own and the Church's Privileges.

THOU may judge, by this time, how difficult it is for a *Frenchman* to elevate himself to a certain Height in Learning; far from being assisted by the Studies of his Youth, they are rather a Hindrance to his Advancement; and contribute to avert him from Truth. Scholastick Philosophy is a Poison that infects the Mind, and renders it incapable of that Justness which is requisite in Reasoning, and which is not to be acquired but by profound Meditation. There are, however, several *French*, who, without any Help, raise themselves to an eminent Degree; they must have so much the more of Genius and Imagination, in that, besides Ignorance, they have the Prejudices of Infancy and Education, inspired into them by their first Masters, to surmount. Were I to tell thee some of their Philosophical Theses, on which Scholars are exercised in this Country, thou could'st not hinder thyself from laughing: Here's one of the most remarkable, taught in a School of certain Monks, called, *Thomistes*: "God may have created the World, and yet the World eternal. — Here's the Proof — "There's no Time in God; in him the Effect still follows the Will. "Let us suppose that God willed that the World should have been for ever, the World then might have been so." A Child conceives that a Thing cannot pass from Non-entity to Existence, or from Nothing to Something, without having had a Beginning; consequently if the World has been made, a Time has been when it was not, and *ergo* it is not eternal. It is in such Subtilties and chimeri-

cal Reasonings that Youth pass the Time of their Studies; and, after several Years Application, they're no wiser than they were at first.

IN my first Letter, my dear *Isaac*, I shall make Amends for the Seriousness of this: I endeavour alternately to divert and instruct thee: I fancy that in thee I have all the different Tastes to please, and therefore I write on all the different Subjects that present themselves to my Imagination.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER XIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I RETURNED, some Days ago, to visit the Libraries mentioned in my last Letter, and ran over the Works of the ancient Doctors, whom the *Nazarenes* call Fathers; in which I found many excellent Things, and worthy of a Philosopher's Attention; but was surprized to see, from some Passages, how far Heat and Animosity had carried Persons whom they look'd upon to be Patterns of Moderation; and from thence I conjectur'd that the Books of some *Pagan* Authors (such as *Cicero's* Offices, and the Precepts of *Epictetus*) contained more refined Morals, and more conformable to the Law of Nature. In all Ages the *Nazarene* Doctors have diminished the Value of their Works, by too much Keeness in aspersing Adversaries, and exposing them to publick Hatred: This Passion, so contrary to Modesty, and Greatness of Soul, has hurry'd them to the utmost Extremities; and the Moment they found themselves protected by Princes, or by the People, they preached against

against Toleration, without Respect of Persons, bespattering crown'd Heads, as well as private Men.

THE *French*, now, exclaim against the unbounded Licence of the Preachers in the Days of *Henry III.* and *IV.* and openly condemn them as seditious; esteeming that Opinion, which authorizes the Subjects to rebel against their Prince, or to shake off the Respect due to him, because he's of a different Religion, to be directly contrary to the Welfare of the State, and to the Character of the Man of Honour; not reflecting that what happen'd in the Time of the League, had been practis'd a little after *Constantine's* Death; that's to say, how soon the Clergy had acquired the Credit that was necessary to raise Divisions and Troubles: *Boucher's* seditious Sermons against *Henry IV.* are not more contrary to the Respect due to the Person of the Sovereign, than the outrageous Invectives of *Gregory Nazianzen* against the Emperor *Julien*. The *Nazarene* Doctor thought he had a Right to write against this Prince in the most harsh Terms, because, after his Promotion to the Imperial Crown, he had defaced, by prophane Sacrifices, and stain'd, by abominable Mysteries, the Purity of his Baptism, and Initiation into the holy Mysteries\*; or, which amounts to the same, as *Julien* had forsaken *Nazarisme*, it was his Duty to affront and abuse him. The seditious *Boucher* made use of the same Pretext to exclaim against *Henry IV.* whom he accused of Anti-Popery, or Protestancy. I can't conceive, my dear *Isaac*, why a Thing that was esteem'd to be laudable and just fourteen hundred Years ago, should be now thought criminal: It must either be

\* Ἀμαρπ μὲν οὐκ τὸ λυτρὸν ἀπορούπτεται τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς τελείωσι, τὴν τελείωσιν τῷ μύσει ἀνπηθεῖς. *Gregorii Nazianzeni Invektiva I. in Julianum, pag. 58.*



be allowed that *Boucher* was in the Right to inveigh against *Henry IV.* (a Thing terrible to maintain) or that *Gregory* was in the Wrong to cast a Blemish upon the Memory of the Emperor *Julien*, a Prince gentle, sober, chaste, learned, liberal, intrepid, and possessing, in an eminent Degree, all the moral Vertues.

MANY *Nazarenes* are quite off that Homage and Adoration formerly paid by the Generality of Men to all the ancient Doctors: In the latter Times several of the Learned have shaken off the Yoke of Prejudice, and openly condemned every Thing in the Writings of these Fathers that was contrary to Equity and Integrity; and it is surprizing how they were so long blind-folded, as not to perceive the Resemblance betwixt the Conduct of the ancient Doctors and the Moderns, against whom they have writ so sharply.

IN tracing back *Nazarisme* to it's Source, I find a perfect Resemblance betwixt the ancient and modern Clergy, with Respect to Manners, Customs, Maxims, and Opinions. *Eusebius* paints out, in the Person of *Paul of Samos*, the Pride of *Italian, French, German, and English* Prelates, &c. "Not to mention, says this Author, the Pride and Arrogance which secular Dignities gave him, he preferred the Ducal Title to that of Bishop, walk'd pompously in publick Places, reading and dictating Letters, surrounded with his Guards, and his Pride and Vain-glory had made the Christian Religion odious to the Gentiles \*."

COULD

\* Οὐτε ως υψιλα φρονεῖ καὶ ὑπὲρται κοσμητικὰ ἀξιώματα υποδυσωμένη. ἢ Δεχνηάρι μαλλον ἢ Ἐπίσκοπος δελων καλεῖται καὶ σοβῶν κατὰ τὰς ἀγοράς. Καὶ ἐπισολαὶς ἀναγινοσκῶν καὶ ὑπαγορευῶν ἅμα βασιζων δημοσία καὶ διορυφορέμενη τῶν μὲν προπορευόμενων τῶν δὲ ἐφεπορευῶν πᾶσιν



COULD there have been, my dear *Isaac*, a more exact Picture drawn of a Cardinal strutting along in *Fioco*, in the Streets of *Rome*? And, to make it pass for an Extract out of the Books of some modern Historian, there's no more to be done but to change the three last Words, and reading — by his Pride and Vain-glory he made the *Romish* Religion odious to the *Jews*, in place of the Christian Religion odious to the *Gentiles*.

IF the ancient *Nazarene* Doctors and Prelates had the Pride of the Moderns, they had also the same Spirit of Dominion; they were equally industrious to draw the Sovereigns over to their Interest, and to persuade them that Religion required Persecution against those who were not orthodox; “It was on this Footing that they persuaded the Emperor *Justinian* he was not guilty of Murder, in condemning those to die who professed a different Religion from his own \*.”

THERE'S no Difficulty of discovering among the ancient *Nazarene* Pontives a Proneness of pushing Things to Extremes, of animating the People, and exciting Seditions, when necessary to increase their Power. *Cyril*, of *Alexandria*, was a true Cardinal *Rets*, and acted in *Egypt* what this did in *France*; all the *Nazarene* Authors, of whatsoever Sect, agree in this; “*St. Cyril*, says *Barbeirac* †, according to the Abbot *Du Pin*'s Opinion

πολλῶν τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὥς καὶ τὴν πῖσιν φθονεῖσθαι καὶ μισεῖσθαι διὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὡς καὶ τὴν τίςιν φθονεῖσθαι καὶ μισεῖσθαι διὰ τὸν ὄγκον αὐτῶ καὶ τὴν υπερηφανίαν τῆς καρδίας. Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. Lib. Cap. xxx. pag. 280. Edit. Vales.

\* Οὐγὰς οἱ εἰλόκει φόβος ἀνθρώπων εἶναι, ἣν γὰρ μὴ τῆς αὐτῶ δόξης οἱ τελευτῶντες τυχοῖεν οὗτοι. Procopius, in *Ανεκδοτοῖς*, pag. 60.

† Preface on the Laws of Nature and Nations, Page 46.

" nion, was a Man ambitious and hot, who, stu-  
 " dying nothing so much as to augment his Au-  
 " thority, no sooner saw himself elevated to the  
 " Episcopal Dignity, but, by his own proper Au-  
 " thority, he drove away the *Novatians*, and plun-  
 " der'd their Bishop: He attack'd the *Jews* in their  
 " Synagogues, and, at the Head of his People,  
 " drove them out of *Alexandria*, permitting the  
 " Christians to plunder their Effects, relying, no  
 " Doubt, on that holy Maxim of the Bishop of  
 " *Hyponna*, that every Thing belongs to the Faith-  
 " ful, and that the Wicked can possess nothing  
 " justly. Besides all this, he quarrell'd with *Ore-*  
 " *stes*, Governor of *Alexandria*, on whose Au-  
 " thority he made daily Incroachments. One Day  
 " about five hundred Monks, out of Zeal to their  
 " Bishop, surrounded the Governor, wounded  
 " him with a Stone thrown, and would have kil-  
 " led him, had not his Guards and the People  
 " stopped their Fury. This cost the Life of a  
 " Monk who was taken, and died on the Wheel,  
 " but made a Saint by St. *Cyril*. A poor Female  
 " Philosopher, named *Hipacia*, was cruelly sacri-  
 " ficed, by some of the Bishop's Party, to the  
 " Manes of their Martyrs, because she was ac-  
 " cused of irritating the Governor against the  
 " Prelate."

- Is not this, my dear *Isaac*, the exact Equiva-  
 lent of the Troubles occasioned by the *Frondeurs* \*?  
 It's true, the Cardinal *Rets* was not escorted by  
 five hundred Monks when he went to the Parlia-  
 ment; but he employ'd a great many in different  
 Things not less useful to his Designs. Methinks  
 I see, in the Person of the *Egyptian* Governor, the  
 Cardinal *Mazarin* obliged to leave *Paris*; and, in  
 that of *Cyril*, I find the Audaciousness, Haughti-  
 ness, Ambition, and turbulent Spirit, of the *Pa-*  
*risien*

\* Sticklers against the Government.

*rifien* Pontife; and I don't imagine that two Characters more resembling can be found, than those of these two *Nazarene* Prelates; yet, by an astonishing Caprice, which the human Mind is only capable of, the one is consider'd as a Saint, and whose Writings are to serve as a Standard to *Nazarene* Morals; and the other as a seditious Imposter, and a Man unworthy of the Rank which he possessed. The Reason probably of such a heteroclite, irregular Way of thinking, is, because the one lived thirteen hundred Years ago, and the other, for his Misfortune, was born in latter Days: Had he been Patriarch of *Alexandria*, he might, with Impunity, have attacked the Governor, at the Head of an Army of Monks, revolted the People, and stirred them up to tear a Woman to Pieces, whose Sex, and superior Genius, could not preserve her from monachal Fury, without throwing a Blemish upon his Memory, by Actions so contrary to his Character.

It's happy for some that they come to the World in certain critical Times; they reap the same Advantage from Superstition and Ignorance, as Conquerors, from Circumstances and Chance: If *Alexander* had lived in the Days of *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, he had been a petty King of *Macedonia*, who would have thought himself happy to have served under one of these *Romans*; he would have acted on the Stage of the World no brighter Part than *Dejotarus*, *Ptolomy*, and many other Sovereigns. Had the *Cyrils*, *Nazianzen* *Gregorys*, the *Austins*, and several others, writ under *Henry III.* and *IV.* they would have been look'd upon as seditious, or as Persons who had sometimes preach'd a Morality intirely opposite to natural Equity: In effect, is there any thing so directly contrary to Humanity, as the Sentiment which *Austin* maintains? "That, according to the divine Law, all  
" belongs



“ belongs to the just and true Believers ; and that  
 “ Hereticks can possess nothing lawfully.” A  
 Modern \* has given a severe Reprimand to this  
 Doctor, upon Account of his Opinion, so contra-  
 ry to the publick Tranquility : “ This abomina-  
 “ ble Principle, says he, ruins, to all Intents and  
 “ Purposes, human Society.”

AN Opinion attended with Consequences per-  
 nicious to the whole World, can't be condemn'd  
 with too much Heat and Passion. The greatest  
 Mistortunes, with which States have been afflict-  
 ed, have commonly sprung from this Source, that  
 it was lawful to rob and plunder Infidels, and to  
 force them to change their Religion. Upon what  
 other Maxim than this is founded the horrible  
 Massacre of *St. Bartholemew*? How much have  
 People of Probity exclaimed against the Divines,  
 who, by their seditious Discourses, had animated  
 the People? and with what Detestation have they  
 not expressed themselves against the Libels, Ser-  
 mons, and what dropp'd from the Pens of the  
 Leaguers †? Yet all these Performances contain'd  
 no other Principle but what *St. Austin* has so stren-  
 uously maintained; so that the modern Preachers  
 said, or rather did no more than paraphrase or  
 comment upon the Discourses of the ancient  
 Doctors: They pretend that *Henry IV.* was not  
 to be acknowledged as King; and that all his Par-  
 tisans were to be destroyed. On what was their  
 Opinions founded? On the Authority of the Fa-  
 thers, and particularly *St. Austin*, who is positive  
 that it's our Duty to extirpate Hereticks, to punish  
 them by Death, and to seize on their Goods.  
 Let me, for a Fancy, put myself into the Preacher  
*Boucher's* Place; when my Audience is convinced  
 of

\* *Barbeirac*, Preface on the Laws of Nature and Nations,  
 pag. 36. † Those who were Leaguers in the Reigns of  
*Hen. III.* and *IV.*



of the Goodness of St. *Austin's* Morality, I can easily prove, that to distinguish themselves by a laudable Action, they ought to assassinate *Henry IV.* and to exterminate all those who are of his Party, and here's my Argument, unanswerable: "St. *Austin's* Books contain nothing but useful Precepts, which ought to be look'd upon as essential to Religion. One of those Precepts expressly ordains to punish Hereticks by Death, and to seize upon all their Effects. *Henry IV.* was a Heretic excommunicated by the Pope, and those who are attached to him as guilty as himself, therefore he and all his Partisans are to be exterminated: Whosoever maintains a contrary Opinion, is in an Error, and a Rebel to the Authority of the Fathers."

WHEN one reflects, my dear *Isaac*, on this Objection against the blind Credulity that many *Nazarenes* give to the Writings of their ancient Doctors, without distinguishing the Good from the Bad that's in them, he must be surpris'd at the Force of Prejudice. If the blind Admirers of the Fathers should only say, that they find excellent Things in their Works, none would deny it; but to receive, as certain and evident Principles, the Errors which are discovered in them; and that, because *Austin*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, *Chrysostom*, and others, have advanced an Opinion contrary to the Law of Nations, and the Light of Nature, Mankind, in spite of good Sense and Conviction, shall be forced for several Ages to give a blind Obedience: 'Tis truly no more nor less than to require that Men should look upon some other Men as Gods, who have had no other Advantage but that of living before us. An Author may give us his Sentiments freely on the particular Opinions of *Bossuet*, *Du Pin*, *Baronius*, and *Bellarmino*, because they have not been a thousand Years dead; but when Ages have

passed over their Writings, the Errors will become certain and fixed Truths; the Case being thus, the Books of *Nazarene* Doctors resemble \**Brie* Cheese, not good till they are long kept.

TAKE Care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, live content and happy, and be always on thy Guard against the dangerous Maxims of the Fathers.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

\* *Brie* a Town in France.



## LETTER XV.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

I NOW answer thy Letter, my dear *Monceca*, which treats of the ancient *Nazarene* Doctors; and tho' I can't but approve of thy Objections against some of their erroneous Opinions that clash with the publick Good, yet, methinks, there's some Partiality in exposing their Faults, without doing Justice to their Merit. I grant that most of them have been often sadly misled; that Passion has hurry'd them to unreasonable Lengths, and that an extravagant Zeal has blinded their Morals; as Men, they were subject to human Frailties; Hatred, Superstition, and Prejudice, have decoy'd them from Integrity: But what Doctors can plead not guilty? Theologers of all Religions are but simple Mortals, and consequently weak Creatures, Self-deceivers, and the Sport of Passions.

PHILOSOPHERS alone are guarded against such Excesses, as their Minds are directed with the Coolness of those who would convince by Reason, not by Violence and Authority; if Warmth or Self-Love lead them into Blunders, they soon acknowledge their Faults, correct their Sallies, and return to the right Road, directed by the Light of Nature, which Heaven has bestowed on Men to serve them as a Guide, and which Philosophers  
con-

consult with great Care. It is necessary then, my dear *Monceca*, to distinguish, in the ancient *Nazarene* Doctors, the Divine from the Philosopher; when they wrote on controverted Points, they did but what our modern Writers practise, abusive Language supply'd the Want of Argument, and Choler pass'd for pious holy Zeal, and to slander their Enemies was to glorify God. Thus did the Minister *Jurien*, in late Days, with Respect to *Arnauld* and *Bayle*; and thus *Jerom*, formerly, treated *Rufine*. But when the ancient Doctors reason'd on Philosophical Matters, without being transported by Passion, they have often equall'd the Glory of the greatest Men.

To be convinced of this Truth, let us only carefully examine *Austin's* Writings, those on Philosophy are as excellent and noble, as those on Controversy are stuff'd with Sophisms and Principles contrary to sound Morals; amongst which may be placed that Maxim of exterminating Hereticks, when the Disputes with the Donatists had rais'd his Gall. If only some of this *Nazarene* Doctor's Writings had been transmitted to Posterity, I should have look'd upon him as a Man not only worthy of Esteem, but even of Admiration; your *Des Cartes's*, *Mallebranche's*, and *Locke's*, are beholding to this *African*; and what they have borrowed from him is not the least valuable of their Works.

PERHAPS thou hast never reflected on what I tell thee; but it will be no difficult Matter to shew thee plainly that the modern Metaphysicians have extracted their principal Opinions out of the Books of this *Nazarene* Doctor, to whom alone may be ascribed the Restoration of Metaphysicks.

I SHALL begin this Examination with *Mallebranche*, whose System of Ideas (by which we see all in God) is drawn out at large by *Austin*; and



the modern Philosopher has almost used his very Expressions: "God, says *Mallebranche* \*, is most "strictly united to our Souls by his Presence; "so that he may be said to be the Place of Spirits, as Space is the Place of Bodies: This being supposed, it is certain that the Mind can "discern what there is in God, which represents "created Beings, since that is most spiritual, most "intelligible, and most closely present to the "Mind; so that the Mind can see, in God, the "Works of God, supposing that he vouchsafes "to discover to it what he has in himself that represents them." Let us now see what *Austin* says. "Almighty God, thou hast created all Beings, and givest them Life. Thou art in all "Places, and fillest them equally; the Mind may "feel it, but cannot know it: Tho' thou'rt every "where present, when it is not to reward Virtue, "its to punish Vice; all existing Things exist in "thee; thou givest Life to some Things, and Understanding to others †." I think, my dear *Monceca*, that I have Reason on my Side when I maintain that the System of the *French* Philosopher was not unknown to the *African*: All the rest of the Chapter from whence this Passage is taken, fortifies my Sentiment; and *Mallebranche* himself seems to acknowledge that this Opinion had been received, and even adopted by *Austin*.

THAT of the innate Ideas, so cherish'd by the *Cartesians*, is also found in his Works; and it's from them that the modern Metaphysicians have pick'd

\* *Search after Truth*, Book III. Chap. vi. pag. 199.

† Qui solus vivificas omnia; qui creasti omnia; qui ubique es, & ubique totus; qui sentiri potes, videri non potes; qui nusquam dees; qui ubi non es per gratiam, ades per vindictam; qui omnia tangis —; quædam enim tangis, ut sint & vivant, non tamen ut sentiant & discernant, quædam vero tangis, ut vivant, & sentiant, & discernant —; & omnia confines sine ambitu, es præsens sine situ & motu. *August. Hiponens. Episc. Meditat. Cap. xxix. Numb. 3. & 6.*



pick'd out all their Arguments. "I think, therefore I am," says one of *Des Cartes's* renown'd Disciples\*. "Now, we can have no Certainty of this Proposition, if we don't distinctly conceive what it is to be, and to think. If it can't then be deny'd that we have not inwardly the Ideas of Being, and of Thought, I demand by which of the Senses they are communicated? Are they luminous or coloured, and have the Eyes for their Vehicles? Of a hollow or sharp Sound, piercing our Ears? Of a fragrant or noisom Smell, snuff'd up into the Nose? Of a sweet or sower Taste, entering at the Mouth? Cold or hot, hard or soft, owing their Admittance to touch? If nothing that is satisfactory or reasonable can be answer'd to these Questions, it must be acknowledged that the Ideas of Being and of Thought do, by no Means, proceed originally from the Senses." These are the strongest Reasons against the System, which makes the Ideas depend upon the Senses; and they further serve to prove that we have an innate Notion of the Divinity, which the Soul brings along with her. "For, says the same Author, whom I have but now quoted, we are naturally inclinable to believe that our Judgments are false, when we see clearly that they are contrary to the Ideas of Things, so could we make no certain Judgment that God has no Parts, that he is not corporal, that he is every where, and that he is indivisible, had we no Idea but from the Senses."

ALL these Objections are taken, almost Word for Word, out of *Austin's* Writings, who proves, in a strong and persuasive Manner, that we must seek to know God in himself, and not in exterior Things, the Senses being incapable of giving any

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true

\* *The Art of Thinking*, Part I. Chap. i. pag. 11.

true Idea of the Divinity. " I have long wandered as a stray'd Sheep, says this *Nazarene* Doctor; I sought thee without, and thou wast within me; I set all my Senses to work, but learned nothing from them; and had'st thou not been pleased to teach me that thy Residence was in my Mind, I should never have known thee, by Means of my Senses\*." After laying down as a Principle the innate Idea of the Divinity, he proves it by the same Reasons which the *Cartesian* Philosophers employ to demonstrate that the Notions of Being and of Thought cannot proceed from the Senses. " If I ask my Eyes, continues he, for want of Colour they could not see him; my Ears tell me that without Sound they could not hear him; my Nose snuff'd up no Smell, my Mouth felt no Taste, and without Matter touch is lost; in short, all agree that, as their Knowledge moves only within the Sphere of Matter, they could give no Idea of thee; and now I know that what Notion I have was engraven upon my Mind, &c."†

As I have made it evident to thee, my dear *Monceca*, that not only the chief Points of the *Cartesian* Metaphysicks, but also the Arguments with which they support them are taken out of *Austin's*

\* Ego erravi sicut Ovis, quæ perierat, quærens te exterius qui es interius; & multum laboravi, quærens te extra me, & tu habitas in me. Misi Nuncios meos omnes Sensus exteriores, ut quærent te, & non inveni; quia male quærebam foris, quod erat intus. Video enim, Lux mea Deus, qui illuminastime, quia male te per illas quærebam, quia tu es intus, & tamen ipsi ubi intraveris nescierunt. *August. Soliloq. Cap. xxxi. Num. I.*

† Nam Oculi dicunt, si coloratus non fuit, per nos non intravit. Aures dicunt, si Sonitum non facit, per nos non transit. Nasus dicit, si non oluit, per me non venit. Gustus dicit, si non sapuit, nec per me introivit. Tactus etiam addit, si corpulentus non est, nihil me de hac re interrogas--- Absit ut ista crediderim Deum meum, quæ etiam à Brutalium Sensibus comprehenduntur. *Augustinus, ibid. Numb. 2.*

*Austin's* Writings: I will, with the same Facility and Evidence, shew thee that *Locke* is beholden to this *Nazarene* Doctor for the Proofs of God's Existence, and the Creation of the Universe. "It is an evident Demonstration, says this great *English* Philosopher, that from Eternity there has been something, since what was not from Eternity had a Beginning, and what had a Beginning must be produced by something else: Next, it is as evident that what had its Being and Beginning from another, must also have all that which is in, and belongs to its Being from another too; all the Power it has must be owing to and received from the same Source: This eternal Source then of all Being, must also be the Source and Original of all Power; and so this eternal Being must be also the most powerful." *Austin* has had the same Thoughts as *Locke*, tho' expressed in a Style not altogether so nice and philosophical. "I asked the Earth, says he, if it was my God? the Answer was, No! I'm a simple Creature, subject to Corruption and to Change; and all the Beings contained in it told me the same Thing: The Sea with all its Inhabitants, the Air, the Birds, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, were all of one Mind, and said, We are but Beings as thyself, created by a first Author; if thou would'st find out the Divinity, trace back to the Source and Origin of all Things\*,"

THE Testimony of the whole Universe concurs then to establish the Existence of a God omnipotent;

\* Interrogavi Terram, si esset Deus meus? Et dixit mihi, quod non; & omnia, quæ in ea sunt hoc idem confessa sunt. Interrogavi Mare, & Abyssos, & reptilia, quæ in his sunt, & responderunt: Non sumus Deus tuus; quare super nos: Interrogavi stabilem Aërem, & inquit universus Aer, cum omnibus Incolis suis: Fallitur Anaximenes, non sum ego Deus tuus. Interrogavi Cœlum, Lunam, & Stellæ: Neque nos sumus Deus tuus, inquirunt. *August Soliloq.* Cap. xxxi.



nipotent; and when I consider the Creation, I plainly see that every Being, who owes its Beginning to another, must also be indebted to that other for every Thing which it hath; the Existence of Creatures is a convincing Proof of the Divinity, and an Attestation that cannot be rejected to make Use of *Austin's* Words\*.

LET us now take a View of the Resemblance of this Doctor's Proofs with *Locke's*, on the Necessity of Matter's being created by an intelligent and spiritual Being: I begin with the Objections of the latter. "Others, says he, would have Matter to be eternal, notwithstanding that they allow an eternal, cogitative, immaterial Being. Matter, say they, must be allowed eternal. Why? Because you cannot conceive how it can be made out of Nothing. Why do you not also think your self eternal? you will answer, perhaps, because about twenty or thirty Years since you began to be. But if I ask what that You is which began then to be, you can scarce tell me: The Matter whereof you are made, began not then to be; for if it did, then it is not eternal; but it began to be put together in such a Fashion and Frame, as makes up your Body; but yet that Frame of Particles is not you, it makes not that thinking Thing you are: Therefore when did that thinking Thing begin to be? If it did never begin to be, then have you been a thinking Thing from Eternity: If therefore

\* "Et dixi omnibus his circumstant Fores Carnis meæ;" Dixistis mihi de Deo meo, quod vos non estis, dicite mihi aliquid de illo. Et clamaverunt omnes voce grandi, ipse fecit nos. "Interrogavi denique Mundi Molem." Dic mihi si es Deus meus an non? Et respondit voce forti: Non sum, inquit, ego; sed per ipsum sum ego. Quem quæris in me, ipse fecit me—Interrogatio Creaturarum profunda est Consideratio ipsarum: Responsio earum Attestatio ipsarum de Deo. *Augustin. Soliloq. Cap. xii. 5.*



“ therefore you can allow a thinking Thing to  
 “ be made out of Nothing, why also can you not  
 “ allow it possible for a material Being to be  
 “ made out of Nothing?

IT is by Reflection on one's self that *Locke* proves the Power of the Creator; and *Austin* makes Use of the same Objection. “ I reflected, “ says he, on my Essence, and considered my “ State: I saw that I was a Man rational and “ mortal; from whence then, said I, proceeds “ such a Creature, if not from the first Scource “ of all other Beings? If God has not created “ them, every Thing must have been its own “ Creator, which, by my own Existence, I know “ to be impossible; and therefore it is necessary “ that all existing Things should have been produced by a first Being omnipotent, intelligent, “ and eternal.”

THE Resemblance betwixt the metaphysical Opinions of our best modern Philosophers, and *Austin*, ought to make thee always distinguish, as I said in the Beginning of this Letter, the Theologian Controversist with the Philosopher; and by following the same Method, in reading the other acient *Nazarene* Doctors, thou may reap a considerable Advantage from many useful and instructive Things to be found in their Works, and of which the Knowledge is necessary to all the Learned, of whatsoever Religion they are.

TAKE Care of thyself, my dear *Monceca*, live content and happy, and diligently apply thyself to the Study of Sciences.

Constantinople, \*\*\*\*\*

LETTER



## LETTER XVI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

SINCE the Receipt of thy Letter, my dear *Isaac*, in favour of the ancient *Nazarene* Doctors, I am endeavouring, by a close Application, to find out the Beauties and Defects of their Works; and notwithstanding thy pompous Encomium on *Austin*, I find that he is guilty of considerable Faults, besides those occasioned by Passion and Anger: An over-strain'd Zeal, which may be justly term'd an immoderate Ambition, has been the Fate, or, rather, the Foible of almost all the Divines; on whom, as a Mark of Distinction, the *Nazarenes* have bestowed the Title of Fathers: But what I find to be pretty singular and extraordinary, is, that, at the very same Time, they were preaching against Toleration, caballing against Princes, and persecuting their Adversaries, some of their Works were filled with many excellent moral Precepts. Thou'rt much in the Right, my dear *Isaac*, that among the Fathers the Divine is to be distinguished from the Philosopher; for few there are who have ever equall'd them in *Pro* and *Con*, and *Palidomies*; which, in plain *English*, is Recanting. *Chrysostom*, for Example, whom they properly enough call the *Grecian Austin*, being just as cholerick and passionate as the *African*, bestows infinite Praises on Clemency, and hesitates not to say, "That this Virtue brings Men on a Level " with the Divinty\*;" but we would be sadly deceived,

\* Nihil est quod sic Dei similes faciat, ut Malignis atque Ledentibus esse placibilem. *Chrysost. Homil. xx. in Matthæum.*

deceived, should we imagine that he practised this Maxim. The first Thing he did, after his Election to the See of *Constantinople*, was, to solicit the Emperor *Arcadius* to grant a rigorous Ordinance against the *Eunomiens* and *Montanists*: He obtained his Request; and these *Nazarenes*, reputed as Hereticks, were not only banished the Imperial City, but all the considerable Towns of the Empire, under Pain of Death. The *Grecian Austin* stopp'd not here: Having no more *Montanists* to banish, he vented his Venom against Persons of the greatest Distinction in his Harrangues, or, rather, publick Invectives.

HIS peevish Temper rais'd at last so many Enemies, that several *Nazarene* Pontives assembled, and deposed him: The Emperor confirm'd the Sentence, and banished *Chrysostom*; who was, however, in a little Time recalled, and restored to his Dignity; but his Disgrace made no Change in his Character: He declaim'd in a most unbecoming Manner against the Empress *Eudoxa*, who drove him anew out of *Constantinople*; and, as they were conducting him to *Pityus*, on the Black Sea, the Place of his Exile, Death came to his Relief.

THIS *Chrysostom* is the Patriarch of the *Molinists*, as *Austin* is of the *Jansenists*; and though they may have different Opinions, with respect to some Points in the *Nazarene* Religion, yet they perfectly agree in condemning Toleration, and thereby destroy the first Principle of the Law of Nature, by which we are commanded to do as we would be done by, or not to do to others what we think they should not do to us; according to this Maxim, what would a *Nazarene* think of *Turks*, should they command them to believe in *Mahomet* under Pain of Death?

CHRYSOSTOM'S Works are writ in a pretty neat Manner, and his Stile comes nearer to the  
Authors

Authors of ancient *Athens*, than *Austin's* to the Elegancy of the Writers in *Augustus's* Days. In general, the *Greek* Fathers expressed themselves in a more refined Manner than the *Latins*. *Basil's* Homelies, for Language, may be compared to *Demosthenes's* Philippicks; and *Jerome* has been the last of the *Nazarene* Doctors who has writ *Latin* in an elegant Manner.

NOTHING less than the good Things which are found in some of *Austin's* Works could have made People bear with the Dulness of his Stile; the same Thing is twenty Times repeated in twenty different Manners. Is there any thing, for Example, so childish, any thing so bombast, as that Part, where, as thou hast taken Notice in thy Letter\*, after shewing that the Senses cannot communicate to the Mind any Notion of the Divinity, he new shapes the Objection that he but just now made? "Nevertheless, I seek my God; " I seek a Light above all Light, which the Mind " perceiveth not; I seek a Voice above all Voices, " which the Ear heareth not; I seek an Odour " above all Odours, which the Nose smelleth " not; I seek something soft above all Softness, " which the Touch cannot feel †." The same Thought is again expressed immediately after by new Antithesis's ‡; and two whole Pages are employ'd in turning it over into different Shapes, before he can be satisfied. This declamatory Stile has done a vast Prejudice to *Austin's* best Works; and

\* The preceding Letter.

† Attamen cum Deum meum quero, quero nihilominus quandam Lucem super omnem Lucem, quam non capit Oculus: Quandam vocem super omnem vocem, quam non capit Auris; quandam Dulcorem super omnem dulcedinem quem non capit Gustus. *Div. August. Soliloq. Cap. xxxi. Numb. 3.*

‡ Ista Lux quidem fulget ubi Locus non capit. Ista vox sonat ubi Spiritus non capit. Odor iste redolet ubi Flatus non spargit. Sapor iste sapit ubi non est Edacitas. Amplexus iste tangitur ubi non devellitur.



there's no Reader who can bear to be loaded with a Parcel of rhetorical Figures poor and childish.

THIS Imperfection in *Austin's* Way of Writing has had an unhappy Influence on the Works of many *Nazarene* Doctors, who affected to imitate his Stile, but came short of his Genius, so that they copied him only in his worst, and became ridiculous. The Divines of the X. XI. and XII. Centuries gave much into the figurative Way, and their Works are cramm'd with Sophisms, express'd in Bombast and lofty Terms. *Anselm*, Archbishop of *Canterbury* (who lived in the XI. Century) to prove the Necessity of the Accomplishment of a Mystery in the *Nazarene* Religion, makes a long Discourse to no Purpose, and answers, by Quibbles, an Objection which he proposes to himself. "Was there any Necessity, says he, that the Divinity should cloath itself with human Flesh to save Mankind? The supreme Being has only to will a Thing, and the Effect always follows; therefore Men might have been saved when he thought proper, and consequently the Incarnation was unnecessary: By no Means so, because it was not operated but by the Will of God, who is always just; he thought it necessary, not that he had Occasion to save the World in that Manner, but because human Nature was necessitated to make Satisfaction to the Divinity by that Incarnation: God had no Occasion to suffer; but Man had Occasion for God's Suffering to redeem him from the Pains of Hell. God alone was able to do this; and, without the Incarnation, Man could not have been restored to the Purity of Angels\*."

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\* An aliqua Necessitas coegit, ut Altissimus sic se humiliaret, & Onnipotens ad faciendum aliquid tantum laboraret? Sed omnis Necessitas & Impossibilitas ejus subjacet Volontati: quippe quod vult necesse est esse; & quod non vult impossibile

bi e

Is not this, my dear *Monceca*, a fine Collection of unintelligible Phrases, or, at least, of no Signification? Is it not ridiculous, after asserting that God could save the World as he pleased, to conclude that he could not save Men but by cloathing himself with Humanity, the only effectual Way to bring it about? Strange Quibbling this! and of no Use but to render the Author's Ideas incomprehensible. Should a Divine, in these Days, express himself with such Prolixity, he must expect to be severely reprimanded. How different are the Writings of the *Bossuet's*, *Arnauld's*, *Drelincourt's*, and *Claud's*? yet the *Nazarenes* have not thought fit to bestow on them the pompous Title of Fathers, tho' it must be allowed that for some time they have been very prodigal, and bestowed this Title on People of very ordinary Talents.

*St. Bernard*, who lived in the XII. Century, was not only ignorant, but a declared Enemy to all who cultivated Sciences; and it was not his Fault, if Ignorance did not wholly extinguish them. This Man, by setting up for a Prophet, had acquired a vast Credit, not only with the People, but also with Sovereigns; and upon the Faith of his false Promises of Victory, great Numbers of *Nazarenes* were destroy'd in the Holy War, when they went upon the Conquest of the *Palastine*.

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bile est esse. Solo ergo volente, & quoniam omnis ejus Voluntas semper bona est, solâ fecit hoc Voluntate, non enim Deus egebat, ut hoc Modo Hominem salvum faceret; sed Humana Natura indigebat ut hoc Modo Domino Deo satisfaceret. Non egebat Deus ut tam laboriosa pateretur; sed indigebat Homo, ut sic de profundo Inferni erueretur Divinâ Naturâ. Hæc omnia Humanam Naturam, ut ad hoc restitueretur, propter quod facta erat necesse erat facere. Sed nec illa, nec quidquid Deus non est, poterat ad hoc sufficere, nam Homo ad quod institutus est non restituitur, si non ad Similitudinem Angelorum, in quibus nullam est Peccatum, provehitur. *Anselm*, *Archepisc. Cantuariensis*, *Medit. de Redemptione Generis Humani*, Cap. III. Num. 1.

Having no more *Turks* to destroy, he vented his Spleen on the Learned; and *Abelard* was his first Victim. *Aristotle's* Philosophy, which about that Time began to be taught in *France*, gave him great Uneasiness, and he was at very much Pains to have it exploded, and forbid to be taught. It scarce could be expected that an Author of this Character should have composed any thing that might be useful to the Improvement of human Understanding, so see we that what he has left us is fitter for Enthusiastick Bigots than for the Learned and Philosophers: In some of his Works we find Expressions so low, and so obscene, that the most dissolute Licences of *Petronius* cannot match them. "What am I?" says he, in a Book intitl'd, very improperly, *Most devout Meditations*: "What am I? a Man made of a liquid Matter, owing his Existence to human Seed; a Froth which, by degrees congealing, turns at last to Flesh\*." These are Meditations, my dear *Isaac*, very proper for Physicians, but very improper, in my Opinion, for Youth. How can a young Girl from Fifteen to Twenty, or a young Man of the same Age, think piously and gravely of this "Frothy Seed, which afterwards congeals?" If such Expressions deserve the Title of *Devout Meditations*, why may not we place this *Italian* Sally, *Penso, e ripenso, come l'Humo sia fatto del Spouto d'un Cazzo†. i. e.* I think, and better think, how a Man is made of Spittle, &c. amongst the edifying and pious Sentences; these Words being no more than the just Equivalent of the Doctor's. L 2 AL-

\* Quid sum ego? Homo de Humore liquido. Fui enim in Momento Conceptionis de Humano Semine conceptus. Deinde Spuma illa coagulata, modicum crescendo Caro facta est. *Div. Bernardi Meditationes devotissimæ ad Humanæ Conditionis Cognitionem. Cap. II. Num. 1.*

† It is hoped that the Resemblance of this *Italian* Passage with *St. Bernard's*, will excuse a Liberty which might otherwise give Offence.

ALBERT, and *Thomas Aquinas*, Successors to *Bernard*, exceeded him in Learning, having benefited by the Study of *Aristotle's* Books, against which the *Crusade* Prophet had so earnestly solicited a Prohibition. In the Days of these two Authors, the Sciences began to throw out some Sparks, and to spring, as it were, out of their Ashes: The Writings of the former are pretty much in the Taste of those of his Predecessors\*, with this Difference, that the Antithesis's and Quibbles are not so lavishly interspersed, the Sophisms in smaller Number, and less offensive.

THOU'RT no Stranger to the Works of the Second, containing, without Dispute, many excellent Things, but stained and over-clouded by a Number of others, childish, unnecessary, and absurd, which Ignorance and scholastick Superstition have consecrated under the Name of Theology, and covered with the Vail of Religion. *Thomas Aquinas's* Stile is not much more refined than that of the Authors who preceded him: The bad Taste in Speaking and Writing subsisted till the XV. Century, and was not wholly reformed till the *Nazarene* Divisions: The Divines, having then formed several different Sects, were under a Necessity of pleasing their Readers; and, to gain their Favour, affected to imitate the most renowned Models; thus *Cicero* and *Virgil's* Language was renewed, and in a little Time the Manner of Reasoning was reformed as well as Diction.

IF *Nazarism* had never been disturbed with intestine Divisions, perhaps the Authors would be

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\* Sunt quædam Vitia, quæ libenter sive frequenter Speciem Virtutis prætendunt, ut cum verè Vitia sint, credantur esse Virtutes: sicut Severitas putatur esse Justitia Amaritudo Mentis dicitur Maturitas. Dissolutio creditur Spiritualis Mentis Latitia. Pigritia sive inordinata Tristitia judicatur Morum Gravitas, &c. *Alberti Magni Paradisi. Anim. de Virtut. Libr. I. Prolog.*



as confused now in their Manner of Writing, as in the Days of *Thomas Aquinas*: It does not appear that the *Nazarene* Doctors, who wrote several Years after him, made any remarkable Advances in reforming their own, or the publick Taste; on the contrary, they rather degraded. *Raimond Jordan*, who lived in the XIV. Century, and who christen'd his Productions by the Name of *Idiota*, has stuff'd his Writings with figurative and affected Expressions, so that his Stile is still more lame than *Austin's*; his Picture of divine Love is the Draught, one would think, of some Country *Capuchin* Friar. " Love, says he, mends broken Things, and settles fickle Minds: Love is instructive, and knows no rancour: Love commends, discommends, and is a Stranger to criminal Suspensions: Without Love, all is bad, and with it, all is good: Love rejoices the Heart, and raises it above earthly Things: Love is never idle, but always acting, and still augmenting: Love is the Life of the Soul; who loves not, is dead: Love is not mercenary: Love improves Mankind, provides for all, and bears every Thing with Patience, &c.\*" I stop here, my dear *Isaac*, tho' there's still a Page more of Love's Attributes. A *Franciscan* Missionary, after he had put this long Passage at full length in a Sermon, might conclude that " Love makes Cuckolds, de-

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"bauches

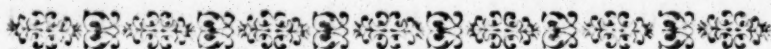
\* Amor contracta solidat, depressa sublevar, nutantem Animum constantem reddit. Amor docet, & addiscit, & Inimicum nescit. Amor laudat, Amor reprehendit, Amor pravâ Suspicionem caret. Ubi Amor defuerit, nihil valet quidquid agitur: contra omnia valent quæ cum Amore aguntur. Amor Hominem lætificat, & à terrenis sublevar. Amor nunquam est otiosus, sed semper aliquid operatur, semper crescit & augetur. Amor Vita est Animæ, & qui non amat mortuus est. Verus Amor non requirit Præmium etsi mereatur. Amor Hominem perficit, omnia sustinet, omnia patienter portat, &c. *Idiota, Veri docti & sancti, Contemplationes de Amore Divino, Cap. I. Num. 2,*

114 JEWISH LETTERS.

“bauches young Girls, and begets Bastards; and  
“ye ought, my dear Sisters, to be upon your  
“Guard.” This would not be the most useleſs  
Thing in his Sermon.

BE careful of thy Health, my dear *Iſaac*, live  
content and happy.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



LETTER XVII.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

**I**F the Winds have favoured the Captain to  
whom I delivered my first Letter, thou ought  
by this time to have received the Memorial of  
*Oſman* Baſhaw's Secretary which I ſent thee; the  
ſingular Ideas contain'd in it, makes me long to  
know thy Sentiments; but I fancy thou'lt eaſily  
perceive that Hatred which the *Mahometans* and  
*Nazarenes* bear the *Iſraelites*.

I HAVE often reflected, that our Law muſt be  
very good, and very agreeable to right Reaſon,  
ſince it is attack'd with ſo little Succeſs. People  
of all Religions are conſtantly writing againſt us,  
and we ſeldom or never answer our Adverſaries  
Performances: Notwithſtanding our Silence, we  
loſe few of our Brethren; and few *Jews* turn  
*Turks* or *Nazarenes*; but it often happens that the  
laſt turn *Mahometans*, and are the leſs excuſable  
in ſo far as Debauchery and Libertiniſm is the  
Cause of their Change.

I CAN'T conceive how a Man, who poſſeſſes  
only the Rudiments of Reaſon, can give into the  
Viſions of *Mahomet*; and I'm even ſurprized that  
 thoſe who are born in that Religion don't, not-  
withſtanding the Prejudices of Youth and Educa-  
tion, ſee through the Fooleries of it. I know  
not

not if thou hast ever examin'd the Series of Impertinencies that form the *Mahometan* Law. I defy the most disorderly and visionary Imagination to produce any thing so chimerical, and so monstrous! How is it possible that there should be a Man so weak as to imagine, that he will taste carnal Pleasures after Death, that one of the principal Blessings which God shall bestow upon him, will be the Enjoyment of several Women, always Virgins? We're surprized that the Pagans believed the Tales and Fables of their Poets about the *Elisian-Fields*, where the Heroes found Chariots, Armour, Horses, and Crowns of Laurel \*. But these Ideas are they less probable than the others? The Punishments which the black Angels inflict, are they not a just Equivalent of the Souls being plunged into *Tartarus* and *Phlegeton*? Nevertheless we are daily exclaiming against the Credulity of the Pagans, but say nothing to the *Turks*, because Custom and Habit have familiarised us to their Fictions.

BESIDES Ridicule, the *Mahometan* Religion has something savage, or rather brutal, in it. The Imbecility of that Notion among the *Turks*, that a Statue in the other World will demand a Soul from him that made it, has induced them to destroy all the antick Pieces of Statuary that they found in *Greece*. *Mahomet*, who conceived that Arts and Sciences served to cultivate the Mind, took Care to remove every Thing from his Followers that might give them a Disgust at his Precepts: He knew that his Religion could not bear the least Examination, and therefore order'd them to

\* Arma procul, Currusque Virum miratur inanes.  
Stant terrâ defixæ Hastæ, passimque soluti  
Per Campos pascuntur Equi, quæ Gratia Curruum  
Armorumque fuit Vivis, quæ Curæ nitentes  
Pascere Equos; eadêm sequitur Tellure repositos.

Virg. *Æneid.* Lib. VI. Vers. 707.

to dispute, Sword in Hand, and not otherwise. Had there been such a Maxim among the *Nazarene* Monks, I doubt much if they would have been so divided in Opinion: The disputing Doctors only fought with the Pen, while those who were of their Party murder'd one another about Opinions, of which they had no Knowledge.

THE People in all Ages have been easily seduced, apt to be deceived, and obstinate in Error; they love Novelty, and always run after Objects that strike; the Exterior lays hold of them, and nothing but what has Singularity in it can move them; plain Reason, stript of Chimeras, appears too naked, and their Minds must be filled with something marvellous: Thus the wild Conceits of Poets gain'd Belief among the Pagans, and thus the *Mahometans* believe the Fables of the *Alcoran*.

YET, amidst all the Absurdities of the *Turkish* Religion, I can't but confess that there are Precepts in it which deserve the Admiration of the greatest Philosophers: That Charity, and the pardoning of Enemies, so often enjoined by their Books, are two Points that comprehend Morality in its fullest Extent and Perfection; but the Beauty of all is, that they not only believe, but exactly practice them: Thou knowest the Extent of their Charities to the Poor, whose Necessities they supply even before their Assistance is required; so that there's very few *Turks* who, during their Lives, have not contributed largely, by Alms, to the Relief of the Distressed. Those Inns for Caravans, Wells, and Fountains, on the publick Roads, for the Commodity of Pilgrims and poor Travellers, of whatever Religion they may be, are eternal Monuments of *Mahometan* Piety: Their Compassion of the Miserable is not bounded here, but extends itself still further; witness the Hospitals



tals for the Incurable, Maimed, and those deprived of the Use of Reason, for whom they have a Sort of Veneration, imagining that Heaven, by this Deprivation, exempts them from Sins, which otherwise they would have committed. Wert thou not of *Constantinople*, thou would'st scarce believe that there are *Turks* who, on a Death-Bed, leave Legacies for the Entertainment of Dogs in the Neighbourhood: This is pushing Charity to a very great Length! The other Virtues are not unknown in *Turky*; no Nation can boast of more Sincerity; they are Slaves to their Words, and the Difference of Religion is not to serve as a Pretext to cheat those with whom we have Affairs of Interest.

THE Respect with which the *Mahometans* honour their Parents is Praise-worthy; we seldom see at *Constantinople*, as in *Nazarene* Countries, Sons who make Nature blush; Masters of Families preserving that Authority over their Children which our Patriarchs exercised. The *Tartars* and *Arabians* are still more zealous Observers of filial Obedience: But what is most admirable, they have no Inclination to Detraction, and are seldom known to rail at one another; they are utter Strangers to the Art of throwing Venom into Discourse, or of making Calumnies and Scandal the Subject of Conversation. I have often considered how they came to be guarded against this Vice: Men of all Countries having a pretty close Resemblance to one another, I could not conceive how the *Turks* were not liable to Weaknesses so common elsewhere; and could not account for their being exempted from the predominant Failings of the greatest Part of the World, otherwise than by attributing it to their Manners and Way of Living. They have but little Inter-course with one another, except what regards their  
Posts

Posts and Employments: There's no such Thing amongst them as Houses set apart for the Reception of noted Idlers: They have no Notion of passing a Part of the Day in an Assembly, to entertain one another with the Talk of the Town: When they go to the Coffee-houses, the only publick Places, they drink Sherbet, or other Liquors that are permitted; sometimes, but seldom, they play at Draughts, or at *Mangala* \*, with a profound Silence, and thereafter retire Home.

THE Impossibility of having Access to the Women, is a decisive Reason why *Constantinople* is so free of Slander: The Ladies in *Europe* are the Ring-leaders in Calumny; Hatred, Jealousy, Ambition, the Desire of pleasing: All these Passions prompt them to act against their Rivals, or those who disapprove of their Inclinations; they easily draw in a great many *Petits-Maitres*, zealous Admirers of their Whims, and humble Slaves to their Commands: The Constraint under which the *Turkish* Women are kept, deprives them of all such Expedients; they may well cabal, within the Seraglio, against Rivals, or so, but as nothing of that Kind can possibly pierce through the Walls of their Prisons, what's done within them can never come to the Knowledge of the Publick.

THE reserved and silent Character of the *Turks*, is also a Preservative against Calumny; your talkative, fiddle-faddle People, are addicted to this Vice; it's a Means to get Audience; and the Heart of Man, more apt to blame than to praise, easily falls in with slanderous Conversation; the *Nazarene* Beaux, great Talkers to their Trade, as thou hast observed, are very much addicted to this Failing.

THE Candour which reigns amongst *Mahometans*, has often made me extremely thoughtful. I  
must

\* A *Turkish* Game with little Shells.

must acknowledge, my dear *Aaron*, that I am sensibly touch'd when I think of their Fate after Death; the Loss of so many honest People (who are guilty of no other Crime but of following the Prejudices of Education, and blindly believing the extravagant Notions of their Imaus and Dervis's) gives me no small Concern: These *Turkish* Monks act the same Part as the *Nazarene* Friars; they cheat and deceive the People, fill their Minds with Chimera's, and, under the Vail of Religion, authorize their Vices and Irregularities.

IN the following Story of a Dervis, which happened when I was at *Adrianople*, thou'lt find something as arch as any of the *Nazarene* Monks I ricks. This holy Hypocrite had retired to a Hermitage, distant about half a League from the Town, and remained whole Weeks without coming out, or opening his Door: It was currently reported that, during the Time of his being thus shut up, he was in continual Extasies and Trances, and was visited by the Angel *Gabriel*, who conversed familiarly with him; so that in a little Time his Reputation spread abroad, and People came from all Quarters to consult with him about the Concerns of their Souls: The Women were curious to converse with this holy Man, and many of them who went to his Hermitage returned highly edified; but the jealous Temper of some *Turks* could not be reconciled to these frequent Visits, and therefore strict Commands were given by some of them to their Wives not to return; upon which they complained to the Cadis, who, not thinking proper to meddle in it, sent them away without any Answer. This Affair being the Subject of general Conversation, and the whole Town-talk, came at last to the Knowledge of the Dervis, who resolved to make a proper Use of it, for his Sanctity was meer Grimace, as many good Women could,  
from

from Experience, attest. A Church-yard near to his Hermitage, where a Man had been lately buried, furnished him an Opportunity of imposing upon the jealous Husbands: In the dead Time of the Night he went and opened the Grave, castrated the Corpse, and hung up, in the most conspicuous Place of his Cell, betwixt two Passages of the Alcoran, what he had cut off; thereafter wrapt himself up in his Cloak, and went to Bed. The first who came to visit him perceiving these terrible Relicks, were strangely surprized. "I have been obliged, said the Dervis, to perform this cruel Operation upon myself, to remove all Occasion of Slander, and that I may, with Liberty, instruct the Fair Sex." If his Reputation was great before, it was much more now, and the Husbands who had forced the Anchoret to this pious Action, were like to have been ston'd. The Women flock'd to him, he undeceiv'd some of them, and the Husbands had no Suspicion. For several Years he made a good Use of his Reputation, but at last Jealousy ruin'd all: A Merchant's Wife, highly provok'd upon Account of his preferring a Rival, went to the Cadis, and swore a Rape against him, and told the Story of the dead Body (which the Hermit, it seems, had imparted to her) consenting to the most rigorous Punishment, if what she said was not Fact: Upon a Visit which this Accusation occasioned, it was found that the Dervis was far from being an Eunuch, and the Judge ordered that the Operation should be performed on him as a Punishment of his Crime. The injured Husbands were in such Numbers, that they comforted one another, and thought it was wisest to hold their Peace and be easy. Now, I fancy, thou must allow that this comes up to the best of your Monks Tricks, and that a *Mahometan* Dervis yields not to a Na-

*zarene*



zarene Friar in Sloth, Inutility to the State, Hypocrisy, or Imposture.

*Constantinople, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER XVIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

VIRTUE alone in this Country ennobles not a Family; ten Ancestors, whose Candour and Honour have deserved the publick Esteem, are not so good a Title as a little Secretariship; so that Nobility, like other Merchandize, is bought and sold: A Partisan, enriched with the Spoils of the People, makes his Son a Lord; whereas the Son of an able Historian, an eminent Poet, who often inherits the Father's Talents, has no other Rank or Honours but what *Apollo* bestows on him: The most signal Merit, the most extensive Knowledge, will not bring a Man half so soon to Grandeurs and Riches, as the Employment of an Under-farmer. We daily see, at *Paris*, People, whose first Trade was that of Footmen, carried about in sumptuous Coaches, and lodged in magnificent Palaces. This Sport of Fortune is very common here; but what is most surprizing, is, that those very People, who are look'd upon as the Disgrace of the Nation, and the Instrument of the Peoples Misfortunes, should find many so mean spirited as to make their Court to them: Their Tables, magnificently served, draw a great many Parasites, and their being full of Money procures them Respect from the first Quality, who often want to borrow of them; and sometimes their Estates are so incumber'd, that

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they

they are forced, a Thing unworthy of their Birth, to contract Alliances with these Financers.

WHEN a Partisan finds himself possessed of great Riches, he endeavours to purchase some young Lady of Quality: Her Parents conclude the Marriage, take the Girl out of the Convent, who is much surprized to find that her Chamber-Maid is her Husband's Cousin. The Lustre which this new Alliance gives the Financer, makes him quite forget his old State; he thinks no more of the sinister Practices made use of to acquire his Wealth, and quite forgets the Ills which he has done to the Widow and the Orphan; he speaks of nothing but Quality and ancient Titles, and his whole Business is searching into Registers and Notaries Offices, for Papers to prove the Antiquity of his House; and by frequently giving himself out for a Man of Quality, he is almost persuaded at last that he really is so: Genealogists are not wanting to draw out his Pedigree, nor half starved Poets to sing him as an *Achilles*, or *Æneas*, and make him the Hero of an Epick Poem for a few Guineas.

THOSE Honours and Riches lavished upon People who deserve them so little, are one of the Things which have most surprized me at *Paris*: The *Mahometans* have a more judicious Way of Thinking; with them Virtue alone leads to Grandeurs, and there's no other Nobility but what Actions and Merit acquire; a Vizir's Son, who is not deserving of an honourable Post, is confined to an obscure Rank, and a Cocker's Son, if he has Merit, may be elevated to the most eminent Dignity. Consider, my dear *Isaac*, how much more useful this Maxim is to the Good and Benefit of the State; it encourages the Citizens to render themselves worthy of Honours, and raises their Courage by the Hopes of attaining to the highest Ranks;

Ranks; they are prompted to noble Actions with so much the more Courage and Resolution, that they know the Want of Birth is no Hindrance to Preferment. If the *French* put such a Value, and rely so much on the Sentiments of their Nobility, what may not the *Turks* expect? since the least *Mahometan* thinks and acts as a Nobleman, has the same Passion for Glory, and the same Hopes of acquiring it: I know, amongst the *French*, it has been seen, sometimes, by extraordinary Accidents, that a Man of the meaner Sort has raised himself to an eminent Station; but this Case happens so seldom, that it's but a weak Precedent: All the Employments and Posts of Honour are possessed by the Nobility, and it is a great Chance when a *Plebian* surmounts the Obstacles that lye in the Way of his Fortune and Preferment.

THESE Reflections lead me to the different Estates of which *France* is composed; viz. the Clergy, Nobility, and Commonalty; the Ecclesiasticks (at whose Head are the Pontives \*) hold the first Rank, next to them the Nobility, and last of all the Commons, represented by the Deputies of Towns and Provinces.

FORMERLY Assemblies of these three Bodies were held under the Title of *States General*: They deliberated conjointly with the Sovereign, on what appeared to be necessary for the Good of the Country, and were a Ballance betwixt the King and People; but, by degrees, the Kings, who had the sole Power of calling those Assemblies, abolish'd them, substituting their own proper *Ordonnances* in Place of those of the Estates, and, by that Means, investing themselves with the whole legislative Power. The Divisions that reign'd among the three representative Bodies of the Nation, did not a little contribute to the Success of this Pro-

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ject;

\* Bishops.

ject; the Hatred of the Clergy against the Nobility, and the Grudge which the People bore the two Orders, were the chief Instruments of *French* Slavery.

THIS Dis-union still subsists; Time has not been able to diminish it; the Ambition of Pontives, their Passion for Power and Authority, is a Tyranny insupportable to the Nobility; it grieves them to see Dignities, and distinguish'd Posts, bestowed on People who constantly oppose them; the Power of the Clergy goes much against the Grain with them, and the more their Enemies Credit increases, the more their Hatred grows: The People, on their Parts, are glad to see those humbled who despise them, and the Yoke that depresses the Nobility, eases them of their Chains.

THERE are also several respectable Bodies\*, which are neither comprehended under the Class of the Nobility, nor of the Commonalty, and are called *Tribunals*, who administrate Justice, and who still preserve some Remains of their ancient Splendour: It is by their Means that the People can make their Grievances and Misfortunes known to the Sovereign; but often they are refused Access to the Throne; an Order from a superior Tribunal † shuts their Mouth; and they have no Right to speak for the People, but so far as it's thought proper to allow them; and tho' their ancient Privileges were much more extensive, they are now reduced to this.

THESE Bodies, which they call Parliaments, are constantly in direct Opposition to the sovereign and subaltern Pontives; in Quality of the sole Depositories of the Church's Privileges, they are still upon their Guard against the Invasions of *Rome*, and the Ordonnances ‡ that come from it: This Attention draws on them the Hatred of the  
greatest

\* The Parliaments. † The Privy Council. ‡ Bulls.



greatest Part of the Pontives, who are zealously attached to their Chief, so that there's a constant Misunderstanding amongst them. The late Duke Regent, when he held the Reins of State, made this Division subservient to his Designs: To amuse the Parliaments, on his Entry to the Ministry, he very cunningly abandoned to them some Pontives \*, and seemed to approve of the Punishment and Rigours that they made them undergo in their Persons and Writings; but when he had obtained of the Parliaments what he wanted, he oppress'd them in their Turns, banished them, and push'd Despotism to a greater Length than any Sovereign had done; and the Pontives were so pleased with their Enemies Misfortunes, that they forgot their own Injuries.

THE Ecclesiasticks enjoy no Pleasure equal to that of Revenge, and they never lose a favourable Opportunity of doing Mischief to those who oppose them; this is one of the Vices to which they are most addicted: Their Lives and Manners are tollerably regular, and could they only banish Hatred and Malice out of their Hearts, few essential Faults would remain. What I now say extends only to Pontives, and secular Priests, for as for Monks, they may be called the Sink of all the Vices, they are generally as scandalous in their Lives, as the others appear to be regular: Now and then, perhaps, a Pontife pays the Tribute of human Nature, but to do them Justice, it very seldom happens.

A MERRY Story enough, on this Subject, is handed about here: It is asserted as a Truth, that a Pontife of the Province of *Auvergne*, having Occasion, at the same Time, to write to his Mistress, and the first Minister, made a Mistake in the Addresses of his Letters; the last made Answer to

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the

\* Bishop of *Apt*, whose Mandate was burnt, and his Temporal distressed.

the Letter he had received (in which the Pontife mentioned his having writ to the *old Woman* of a Cardinal \*, for Liberty to return to *Paris*) that the King commanded him not to stir from Home till further Orders ; and that the old Woman advised him to lead a better Life : This Adventure, assured to be Fact, has afforded some Laughter and Diversion to the Town, but the Author of the Blunder may comfort himself with the Hopes, that in a Day or two some new Story will put it out of Head.

NOVELS and Love-Adventures succeed to one another here as the Waves of the Sea ; and what is the Town-Talk To-day, is scarce thought on To-morrow ; such is the fickle Genius of the Nation ; and eight Days hence the Pontife's Affair will be thought as old, as if it had happened in *Francis* the First's Time.

I CONTINUE to inform myself of every Thing that may contribute to give me distinct Ideas of the State of Sciences in this Kingdom ; and I also examine the Progress of Arts, which have Advantages in *Paris* above what's to be found any where else : *Louis XIV.* has fixed them for ever by the favourable Settlements which he has made for the Encouragement of those who profess them. I have mentioned in my Letters three Academies, which comprehend all the Sciences : There are three others that contain all the Arts ; the First is composed of famous Painters, Sculptures, &c. the Second of excellent Architects ; and the Third is for Musicians. Prizes are distributed by Order of the King among the two former, as a Recompence to those who distinguish themselves by their Merit, and as an Encouragement for others to improve their Talents. Nothing speaks the Grandeur of a Sovereign more than the Tranquility  
and

\* Cardinal Fleury.

and Freedom which Sciences enjoy under his Protection; the Glory of a Prince, who encourages Arts, so as to make them flourish, communicates itself to the whole Nation, who thereby share in the Honour. *Louis XIV.* not satisfied with procuring to his Subjects the Means of excelling in Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, established an Academy at *Rome*\*, where those who had won Prizes at *Paris*, were entertained for three Years at the Prince's Charge; they wrought under the Inspection of an able Artist, and may be compar'd to Bees, who fly Abroad, and come Home loaded with the Juice of fragrant Flowers, to enrich their Habitations.

I HAVE a Letter from *Moses Rodrigo*, who is to send me the Books I wrote for; the Moment they come here, I shall forward them to *Marseilles*: I begg'd of him to write me his Sentiments on the most remarkable Authors, and on the new Books that they publish; by this Means I can send thee any curious Thing that appears in *Holland*, and in *England*.

PRESERVE thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, it is the most precious Gift that Heaven can bestow upon us; and if Wealth is added, our Happiness is complete.

\* This Academy subsists still.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XIX.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I HAVE just now received the Books that I expected from *Holland*; *Moses Rodrigo* sent them by the Way of *Rouen*; I shall soon forward them to *Marseilles*, where our Correspondent will ship them

them for *Constantinople*: I have received with them, a Memorial on the Authors, whose Works may be had; as it appears to be distinct and exact, I thought a Copy of it would be acceptable to thee.

#### DISSERTATION *on* LITERATURE.

“ I SHALL give you, with all possible Exactness, the Instructions which you require: It is here, as at *Paris*, Literature and Authors have their Times and Seasons, more or less favourable; but, what’s particular, there is such a Sympathy betwixt *France* and *Holland*, that those two States have perfectly corresponded in the Production of Genius’s, either sublime or ordinary.

“ IN the last Century, and Beginning of this, *France* had the Advantage of many First-rate Men of Learning, and yet *Holland* pretended a Superiority; the Way to judge of the Truth, is to draw a Parallel.

“ ONE of a vast, profound, and universal Genius (1), was the firmest Prop of his Religion; with the same Pen that he fought foreign Enemies (2), he non-plust’d some Adversaries of his own Religion (3).

“ ONE of a penetrating, sublime, and just Wit (4), who, in spite of the Darkeness of remotest Antiquity, unveil’d the Customs of Ages past, was directly set up against this great Man; and though they could not agree, yet each of them acknowledg’d, that, had there been a Possibility of Reconcilement, the Assistance of others would have been altogether unnecessary, since they themselves were the only Persons capable to convince one another.

“ MUCH about this Time, *France* produced several other great Men; a Bishop (5), an excellent

(1) *Arnauld*. (2) Protestants. (3) Jesuits. (4) *Claude*.

(5) Bishop of *Meaux*.



“ cellent Orator, a good Historian, and a subtle  
 “ Theologian, forced the most inveterate of his  
 “ Enemies to do Justice to his Merit: Another  
 “ Prelate (1), whose Candour, Virtue, and Ho-  
 “ nesty equalled his Knowledge, laid down Les-  
 “ sons for the Education of Kings, and the Hap-  
 “ piness of Subjects; he followed the Antients;  
 “ but surpassed his Models, and was more origi-  
 “ nal than those whom he imitated.

“ A PHILOSOPHER (2) thrust into two  
 “ little Volumes many more Secrets of Nature,  
 “ and physical Experiments, than a thousand Years,  
 “ and thousands of huge Folio’s had taught us; a  
 “ Disciple to the Restorer of good Philosophy (3),  
 “ and who, with the Help of his Master’s Lessons,  
 “ has been able to explain the Cause of ancient  
 “ Prejudices.

“ ANOTHER Metaphysician (4) searched af-  
 “ ter Truth by profound Study; and if he did not  
 “ make a full and complete Discovery, at least  
 “ he often perceived it, and stretched his Know-  
 “ ledge to the utmost Point that human Weak-  
 “ ness can reach.

“ DURING the Time that these illustrious  
 “ Persons flourished in *France, Holland* possessed  
 “ Authors no ways inferior: The first (5) was  
 “ an universal Scholar, a profound Philosopher,  
 “ and an able Critick; his Reputation, Sincerity,  
 “ and the Liberty of his Pen, raised up Enemies  
 “ whom, by his Merit and Learning, he van-  
 “ quished; leaving only to some (6) the Shame of  
 “ having attack’d him, and, to others (7), the Grief  
 “ of not being able to do him Hurt.

“ ANOTHER Author (8) was an ingenious,  
 “ delicate, lively, and agreeable Critick.

“ A

(1) Archbishop of Cambray. (2) Robault. (3) Des Cartes.  
 (4) Malebranche. (5) Bayle. (6) Jurieu. (7) Jaquelot, Ber-  
 nard, and Le Clerc. (8) Basnage de Beauval.

“ A THIRD Writer (1) had the Art of bringing the Proofs of Religion within the Compass of the meanest Capacities; and was the first who durst appeal to Reason, for the Truths of Revelation.

“ ABOUT the Time that Death deprived *Holland* of these great Men, *France* sustained an equal Loss; and tho’ there still remained some who deserved a distinguish’d Rank in the Republick of Letters, yet the Number was but small: People were astonish’d at the Void which the Loss of so many learned Men had occasioned, and Sciences seem’d to have lost that Brightness which enlighten’d the Minds; they fancy’d, that when Destiny, one of the fatal Sisters, had carry’d off the few great Men remaining, Nature could produce no more; but Experience shewed them, in the Sequel, that if every Age did not afford an equal Number of great Men, yet still the Succession was not quite extinct: In *France*, several learned Men were distinguish’d for their Merit; and in *Holland*, there were still some who shared in their Predecessors Glory.

“ S’ GRAVESANDE, a famous Philosopher, Disciple and Rival to *Newton*, has lately published an excellent Introduction to Philosophy, containing Metaphysicks and Logick.

“ BARBEIRAC, the learned Translator of *Puffendorff* and *Grotius*, has enriched the Republick of Letters with several useful Books.

“ LA CHAPELLE is the worthy Successor of the *Drelincourt’s* and *Claude’s*; the Performances dropp’d from his Pen are full of Erudition, not at all loathsome; so that he possesses all the Talents and rare Qualities of the Learned, without their Faults.

“ ROUSSET

" ROUSSET treats in a just, judicious, and  
 " profound Manner, what regards Politicks and  
 " the Interests of Princes, &c.

" THERE are also in *Holland*, some Authors,  
 " whose Writings are valuable; but the Number  
 " of the Learned is much inferior to what it was  
 " twenty Years ago; not so indeed the Number  
 " of Writers; and if 'tis a Proof of Genius to  
 " print Raptodes, never were there more Men of  
 " Wit.

" ONE, press'd by Poverty, compos'd a wretch-  
 " ed Performance\*; he criticises a Book, the Au-  
 " thor of which ought to have been pillory'd, and  
 " his Criticism is worse than the Work itself.

" ANOTHER, wearied with acting the Moun-  
 " tebank, decorates himself with the Title of Phy-  
 " sician†, and fancies, that under the Shelter of  
 " his new Name, he has as good a Title to plague  
 " the Publick with his stupid Performances, as he  
 " formerly did the Mob, when he was mounted  
 " on a Stage, and declaiming on the rare Qua-  
 " lities of his divine Elixir.

" AN old *Maltotier*‡ took it in his Head to  
 " turn Author, and compos'd some miserable  
 " Stuff under the Title of, *Memoirs, Historical and*  
 " *Political*; his Books were writ in the Taste and  
 " Stile of *La Serre* and *Neuf-Germain's* Works.

" A RUN-AWAY Monk, of *St. Victor*, has  
 " had the Impudence to undertake the Continua-  
 " tion of *Rapin's* History of *England*, with the Af-  
 " sistance of an out-law'd Comedian and a Jesuit  
 " fled to *Holland*: What Good could be expected  
 " from such an Association? It has produced,  
 " what People of Sense expected, the most des-  
 " picable

\* *Apology against the Parody of Alcibiades* † The Author  
 of *Anecdotes on History, Gallantry, and Literature.* ‡ The Au-  
 thor of *Memoirs Historical and Political.* *Maltotier* signifies a  
 Tax-gatherer, or an Excise-man.

“ picable Libel that has of a long Time appear’d!  
 “ Impudence, Perfidiousness, and Ignorance, seem  
 “ to contend in this Rapsody, which shall have  
 “ the Honour of disgracing most Pages.

“ AN old Comedian, who from the Theatre  
 “ had made a Jump to a great Man’s Anti-cham-  
 “ ber, as much wearied with the Post of Valet  
 “ de Chambre, as he was dissatisfied with the ima-  
 “ ginary Title of a *Trojan* or *Roman* Prince, com-  
 “ menced Author some Years ago, and compo-  
 “ ses Books in the same Manner that he formerly  
 “ copied his Part in Plays; that’s to say, collects  
 “ some Passages of several Books, and of those  
 “ stolen Scraps makes a Rapsody, to which he  
 “ puts his Name.

“ WE have a great many Authors in this Coun-  
 “ try, who write for Bread; Hunger and Thirst  
 “ are the Muses that inspire them; six Lines are  
 “ the Value of a Loaf, and their Kitchen is found-  
 “ ed on the Number of Sheets that they dawb:  
 “ The Booksellers make a Shift to get them off,  
 “ good or bad, it’s nothing to them if the publick  
 “ Taste should be corrupted, or vitiated with such  
 “ insipid Writings; and they can’t sell white Pa-  
 “ per to those who are eternally calling for new  
 “ Works; so that stiff and dry Romances, where  
 “ there’s neither Conduct nor Character, Poetry  
 “ which *Apollo* had no Hand in, and chimerical,  
 “ incoherent Histories, are greedily snapt away  
 “ by those Book-hunters. Such an Author may  
 “ be found, who imagines that a Mason’s Trade  
 “ and his are much of a Piece; he rears up a Book  
 “ as the other does a Wall, so many measur’d Feet,  
 “ so many Crowns; so many Pages, so many Flo-  
 “ rins: The Mason stints the Day’s Work to  
 “ three Fathom, and the Author his to three Sheets  
 “ in Print, no Matter what, if his Paper is but  
 “ fill’d. I flatter myself that the Books I have  
 “ sent



“ sent you are not of the Number of those writ  
 “ in this Manner, having made Choice of none  
 “ but what I thought were good.”

I DON’r know, my dear *Isaac*, if thou’lt be satisfied with the Pictures represented in this Disseration; I think Justice is done to the Authors sometime since dead, but as thou hast read a Part of their Works, thou’lt be able to judge for thy self; when thou hast perused the new Books, let me know thy Sentiments.

I HAVE often thought what might be the Reason that, under certain Reigns, many illustrious Men lived, and under others but very few; can it be that Nature exhausts herself, and that Ages are required to prepare Matter fit for forming such Heads as *Des Cartes’s*, or *Newton’s*? The Souls, can they be of different Qualities? To maintain this, must run us into Absurdities: The Question then is to know, if Trees grow bigger in certain Ages, than in others? Since Nature is always regular in her Operations, how came she, for two thousand Years, to forget the Method made use of in forming *Sophocles* and *Euripides’s* Brains? And does it not appear that she never recollected herself, till she was framing those of two famous *French Poets* \*?

WE must attribute to other Causes than the Inability of Nature, the Want or Decay of Genius; she forms, in every Age, an equal Number of Persons on whom she bestows the Faculty of attaining to the Grand and Sublime; but these Talents must be cultivated: What can the most fertile Ground produce, if it lies fallow? The Mind is as a Field, producing no Grain but what is sown in it. I told thee how Youth studied, and how little they profited by the Methods made use of: Besides, Glory and Emulation are the *Primum*

N

*Mobile*

\* *Corneille* and *Racine*.

*Mobile* of Sciences; and if the Desire of immortalizing one's self is not supported with Praise, Rewards, and the publick Esteem, it languishes and dozes.

UNDER the Reign of *Louis XIV.* as in that of *Augustus*, Inequality betwixt a great Poet, or an excellent Historian, and a Man who can boast of no other Merit, but that he can reckon up a numerous Race of Ancestors, was unknown; Virtue and Science were recompenced without Regard to Rank; and the Monarch, a Lover of Merit, made the obscurest and remotest Places often feel the Effects of his Favour. The Court, that blind Mimick of the Prince's Vices and Virtues, favour'd and cultivated Sciences, not, perhaps, because they lov'd them. Under the present Reign the Muses have a *Mecenas* in the Sovereign, who, as he inherits his Grandfather's Merit, is also his Successor in good Taste; but Wars, Hurry of Business, and Negotiations, have put a Stop to the Progress of Arts. The Courtiers, whose Minds run upon nothing but Horses, Armour, Sieges and Battles \*, have forgot that the greatest *Roman* Captain was the most learned of the Republick. The Ecclesiasticks, involved in vain Disputes, are wholly taken up about Writings useles for the Instruction of Posterity, as they are tiresome to all People of Sense now living. Good Taste is almost lost, but Peace, Union and Tranquility, will no doubt recover it.

TAKE care of thy Health, dear *Isaac*, and let us join in deploring the Vicissitudes of Sciences.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

\* This Letter was writ during the Campaign which followed the Siege of *Philippeau*.



## LETTER XX.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I READ, with Pleasure, thy Letter, my dear *Jacob*, and found the Parallel betwixt ancient and modern *Rome* very judicious; thou might'st have push'd it further, by comparing it's present Spiritual Power in Europe to it's former Sovereignty. One of the *Literati* here advanced a very singular Opinion on this Subject; he pretends that when *Rome* was founded, a Talisman was placed under Ground in the Middle of the City, which assures it of a perpetual Power over Europe, while the Charm subsists; and that as the Talisman has not been removed, nor destroyed, during the Sackings or Conflagrations of *Rome*, it has always recover'd it's Authority over the greatest Part of the European Nations. I oppos'd to these Reasons the Difference of the Sovereignty of the ancient *Romans* to that of the Moderns, he answer'd, that the Talisman did not regulate the Sort of Power, but only assured a Sovereign Authority, and that none could deny but the Pontife had that real Authority over the *Nazarene* States in the all-powerful Spirituality which they allowed him, and in that the greatest Kings, subjected to certain Principles of Religion, and to certain Customs, were under an absolute Necessity of complying, and from which nothing but his Permission could give a Dispensation. As the learned Gentleman, who maintain'd the Reality of the pretended Talisman,

appear'd to be very much persuaded of his Opinion, I thought it was necessary to have Recourse to more philosophical Reasons to convince him of his Error.

I HAVE seen, my dear *Jacob*, many People who were perfectly persuaded of the Power and Virtues of these Talismans: Many of our Rabbies have seem'd to favour that Opinion, of which sound Philosophy easily proves the Falshood; and I think it will be no difficult Thing to prove evidently the Truth of my Sentiment.

It is a certain Principle, that Matter alone can act upon Matter; I pass by the incomprehensible Mystery of the Soul's acting upon the Body, of which I think the Power ought to be attributed to a perpetual Miracle of the Author of Nature. Now, if the Principle, that a Body cannot be put into Motion, but by the Impulsion of another Body, be evident, how is it possible that a Thing which can do nothing, that has no Power over another, can communicate any Property to it? That a Talisnam, a Charm, an Enchantment, may act, it must have a Power of disposing the Thing, on which it is to act, to make such or such a Motion. How then can a Bit of Clay, or Copper, of a Hand's Breadth, on which are engraved some fantastical Spells, have an Impression on a *Frenchman* at three hundred Leagues Distance, and inspire him with that Humility, or with that Obedience, which he necessarily owes to the Pontive's Orders?

BESIDES, it's not enough, for rendering the Enchantment effectual, that Matter acts upon Matter; the Charm must also have a Power to direct the Intention, and to dispose the Mind to Obedience, which is absurd to advance; for the pretended Love-Potions which certain Quacks give, that they may pass for Conjurers, can never have  
such



such Influence on the Soul, as to determine it's Will. Those Wretches prepare Potions which, by heating the Blood, dispose the Spirits to Love, and excite to Concupiscence. We have several Plants, several Animals, of which the Moisture and Juice will cause Agitations in us, but then the Persons who make use of them feel no Disposition to one Object more than another: It often, indeed, happens, that a Woman who has been induced to drink of those pretended Philters, yields to a Lover; and the Reason is evident: When the Situation of the Body is such, that the Soul enjoys not the full Liberty of acting, the Mind naturally bears to the Objects that are most endearing: The State to which those Liquors reduce, being a kind of Sleep, we have always present to our Imagination the Ideas with which we are commonly most affected, as Dreams often present the Objects which employ our Thoughts when awake.

IF Philters could determine the Will of Man, it would necessarily follow, that those who knew their Composition, must have a Power reserved to God alone; they would be Masters of Nature, and Dispensers of Good and Evil; since a Man could not be accountable for Actions to which he is absolutely forced, and to which his Soul is determined by a superior Power: Besides, humanly speaking, Matter cannot act but upon Matter; thus, Philters can't directly influence the Will; they may well (in moving the Springs of the Body, betwixt which and the Soul Nature has cemented a Correspondence) make it dull and heavy, feel Pain, and, in short, Sensations of all Kinds, but still indirectly, and by Means alone of the Body on which they act; therefore, as they are only Secondaries, that can do nothing without the Assistance of another Spring, it would be ridiculous

to assert that they can have more Power than it; and I scarce can believe any Mortal thinks that our Body and Organs determine our Will.

IF it must be allowed then that Philters cannot determine the Soul, much less, can Talismans, since they act not materially, nor have the Advantages of other Charms: What Power has the Figure of a Triangle, or a particular Disposition of certain Letters upon Matter? What Influence, what Impulsion, can all the *Ægyptian* Hieroglyphicks have on a Man's Brain? Truly, my dear *Brito*, when I reflect on the Chimera's and Errors of the Cabalists, nothing appears more ridiculous than their Opinions.

THE Followers of Judicial Astrology are also People fed with Chimera's, and full of Whims: If this Art was true, Nature must have tied up her own Hands, and ours into the Bargain; all our Motions would be writ in the Heavens, and all Freedom taken from us; we should be necessitated to Evil as to Good; and obliged absolutely to perform what is contained in the pretended Register of the Stars, or otherwise the Book must be false, and the Diviner's Knowledge doubtful.

OUR Fate depends on Places, Persons, Times, our own Wills, and not on the chimerical Conjunctions of Quacks and Cheats. Two Men are born under the same Planet, the one a Labourer, the other a Sovereign: What Reason can be assign'd for this Difference? *Jupiter* thought fit it should be so, will an Astrologer directly answer. But what is *Jupiter*? A Body without Knowledge, and which cannot act but by its Influence. Whence comes it then that at the same precise Time, and in the same Climate, it acts so differently? How can this Influence take Place? How pierce thro' the vast Extent of Air? An Atom, the minutest Portion of Matter, stops, diverts, diminishes these pretended

pretended Particles, which they would have the Planets to send us. On the other Hand it may be ask'd, If the Planets have a constant Influence, or only on some Occasions? if it's only in certain Moments, and when the detached Particles happen to meet with us, how can the Astrologer know the precise Time, on which this happens, to judge of their Effect? and if the Influences are continual, how do they with such Quickness pierce through Air, force all resisting Matter, and correspond with the Vivacity of our Passions, from whence spring the principal Actions of our Life? for if the Stars regulate our Sentiments and Actions, their Influences must act with the same Rapidity, as our Will determin'd by them.

TRULY, my dear *Jacob*, it astonishes me that there should be Men so weak, as to give into such ridiculous Visions: These Fortune-Tellers ought to be banished all well govern'd States; and these pretended Magicians severely punished, as Abusers of the credulous People, and Infillers of Superstitions, contrary to Reason and the publick Tranquility\*. Some of those Wretches have been persuaded, that the Impostures which they spread about, were real Truths; so that they were the Bubbles of their own Credulity.

GASSENDI was an Eye-witness to the Delusion of one of these pretended Magicians: This Philosopher, in a Village where he usually retired, to recreate himself, after the Fatigue of Study, perceived a Crowd of Peasants conducting a Shepherd tied and bound: Curiosity made him enquire what this Man, whom they were carrying to Prison, had done? "Sir, answer'd one of them, he's a Sorcerer; we have arrested him, and are now going to deliver him up to Justice."

THE

\* Genus hominum, potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax.

*Tacit. Histor. Lib. 1.*

THE Word *Sorcerer* awaked *Gassendi's* Philosophical Ideas; it was an agreeable Pleasure to him, to have an Opportunity of examining, by himself, the Fables which are told of those Impostors: He ordered the Peasants to conduct the Prisoner to his House, and to leave him under his Charge: As he had great Authority over the People of this Village, they made no Difficulty to obey. "Friend, said he to the Sorcerer, when they were by themselves, thou must tell me plainly if thou hast made any Pact with the Devil? if thou'lt confess thy Crime, I'll set thee at Liberty; but if thou art obstinately silent, I will deliver thee up to the Sheriff." Sir, answered the Shepherd, "I confess that I go every Day to the Nightly Meetings of the Sorcerers; one of my Friends gave me the Balm which is to be swallow'd down, and I have been of the Society for near three Years." *Gassendi* informed himself particularly of the Reception of the pretended Magician, who spoke of all the Demons, as if he had been amongst them all his Life. "Now, says *Gassendi*, thou must shew me the Drug which thou takest to go to the infernal Assembly, for I resolve this Evening to accompany thee." That depends on you, answer'd the Shepherd; if you incline, I will conduct you immediately after the Clock strikes Twelve.

WHEN the Hour approach'd, "Come, says *Gassendi*, it's now Time to prepare for our Departure." The Magician pulled a Box out of his Pocket, in which was a Sort of Opiate: He took out about the Bigness of a Nut for himself, and gave the same Quantity to the Philosopher, desiring him to swallow it, and lye down under the Chimney; assuring him that, in a little Time, a Demon would appear, under the Form of a large Cat, and transport him to the Convention;



tion; these being the usual Horses which the Sorcerers mounted.

GASSENDI, having received the Ointment, pretended that he could not take it till it was wrapt up in something; so went into a Closet, took a little Bit of Preserves out of a Pot, cover'd it with a Wafer, and, returning, told the Shepherd that he was now ready to follow him. Let us stretch ourselves on the Floor, answered the Magician, and in that Attitude take our Balm: No sooner said than done, the Philosopher swallowed the Sweet-meats, and the Sorcerer his usual Drug: In a few Minutes he appeared like one stupified, or mortally drunk, and at last fell asleep; during which he utter'd a thousand extravagant Things, conversing with all the Devils, and his Comrades, whom he supposed to be Magicians as himself. After four or five Hours Sleep, he awoke and found himself in the same Place where he had taken his Drug. "Well, said he to *Gassendi*, you ought "to be satisfied with the Manner that the Goat "received you, to have been admitted, the first "Day of your Reception; to kiss his Posteriors "is no small Honour." After which he recounted a great many extravagant Things about their pretended Meetings.

GASSENDI, touch'd with the State of this poor Wretch, undeceived him, by causing a Dog, in his Presence, to swallow the Balm, which made him very soon fall a sleep. The Shepherd was set at Liberty, and, probably, undeceived his Brethren, who believed the same Impostures.

FORMERLY those imaginary Magicians were burnt in *France*: The Priests, who pretended to the whole Right of exorcising Devils, and to whom this Power gave great Credit, favour'd this cruel Custom: Nothing was to be seen, or heard of, but Enchantments, and People possessed with evil Spirits;

Spirits; and one would have thought that they were in the Days of the *Amadis's*. By Degrees the Illusion was discovered; the Cloud that darkened Truth disappeared, and no more Faith was given to these Cheats: Several Parliaments asserted in their Decisions, that there were no Sorcerers; and when they judg'd any of those Imposters, they punished them as Cheats, and not as Magicians; and this Conduct opened many Peoples Eyes, so that actually the Reputation of Astrologers, and Fortune-Tellers, is of no Account, but with some simple Women, and the meaner Sort of the People.

DEAR *Jacob*, preserve thy Health; and let us jointly deplore the Imbecility of the Vulgar.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXI.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I FULLY answered the first Articles of thy last Letter, and shall now communicate my Thoughts on the others.

IF thou wert a Residenter at *Paris*, and knew'st the Behaviour and Manners of the Opera-Women, thou would'st not condemn the *Romans* for not suffering them to appear on the Stage: Thou exclaimest against three hundred Curtezans at *Rome*, and against the Barbarity of rendering Men incapable of propagating their Species, for the Sake of a fine Voice, and to supply the Want of Singing-Women: I don't approve of those Customs,  
but

but I do maintain that they are less prejudicial to the State than Opera-Girls; two Dancing or Chorus-Women occasion more Trouble, more Scandal, more Bankruptcies among Merchants, more Expences to Men of Quality, and more Sharping and Cheating among many Citizens Children, than the three hundred Curtezans that thou so bitterly exclaim'st against; and if thou but reflectest seriously on what I tell thee, thou'lt easily perceive the Truth.

WHO are the People that frequent the publick Women of *Longare* and *Serena* Streets? Few that are capable to make any Figure, or that are of a distinguish'd Rank, debase themselves so far as to be hurry'd to such Excesses; if they happen, in a Whim, to go to any such Houses, their Stay is so short, that it can neither do Hurt to their Reputation, or their Pockets. Persons of a mean Birth, and some debauched Tradesmen, may be caught in their Snares; and even this but seldom happens; the Horror which the infamous Trade of Curtezan inspires, is a Preservative against their attractive Charms: The Idea which the Publick has of their Character, renders them less hurtful to Society: Men generally hate Vice, that cannot cover itself with the Appearance of Virtue: Dissimulation and Artifice are the distinguishing Talents of Opera-Girls; and their Professions give them Access to good Company: They know how, by a studied Behaviour, and an Air of Modesty, to cover a Heart devour'd with the Love of Riches, and stripp'd of all Sentiments of Virtue, which they look upon to be an importunate Constraint; their Manners are genteel and amiable, and Vice, with them, is like a Serpent hid in a Basket of Flowers: Those, whom a long Experience has instructed in their Maxims, are not to be caught with these exterior Attractives;

Attractives; they are too well acquainted with their poisonous Hearts, to be bubbled by their Artifices; but Numbers of young Men, without Experience, and old Dotards, give into the Snares laid for them; so much the more difficult to avoid, in that these Women have the Art to assume what Character they think most fitting for their Purposes; so that *Proteus* could not put himself into more different Shapes, than an Opera-Girl: Has she a Plot upon some old Fellow, she affects to despise all young Folks, exclaims against the Imprudence of Women who abandon themselves to the Indiscretion of a giddy-headed Youth, extols the Prudence of a Man who is come to the Years of Discretion, and protests that her Heart could not be touched but by one whose Years had ripened his Judgment.

WOULD she, on the other Hand, make a Conquest of a Beau, whoever has passed Thirty, is to her an Object of Raillery: Youth alone has a Right to please; how is it possible to love any Thing that's old? what Relish has a sixty Year old Lover? in short, she sings, dances, and toys; and one would think that *Cupid* and the *Graces* had fixed their Abode with her.

HAS she a rich Partisan in View, it's a new Decoration; every Man that's not rich, is her Horror: "What signifies," says she to a Farmer-General, from whom she draws Sums, "the Friendship of young Lords, to undo a Woman's Reputation, and to beggar her, in place of giving her a Maintenance? Can a Woman of common Sense love a Man because he's often with the King, is a Colonel, and makes a handsome Bow? I protest, added she, that one is much more affected with the good Manners of a Man who knows to give genteely, and to furnish those Conveniencies that make Life happy."

THOU



THOU see'st, my dear *Brito*, how difficult it is to avoid being deceived by these dangerous Syrens; they have greater Advantages than those of the Fable, since they charm by the Eyes, as well as by the Ears; when a Man is so unhappy as to fall into the Traps of these Inchantresses, he's lost; being inclosed in a Labyrinth from whence there's no Out-let: Cunning, Deceit, false Oaths, Hypocrisy, feigned Despair, false Assurance of eternal Love, are so many Windings, through which he can't find his Way.

THE Talent of retaining Hearts, in their Chains, is reserved to Opera-Dames; do they perceive that Enjoyment and Tranquility slacken a Lover's Fondness? they give him a Dose of Jealousy, but so prepared, that they're not so afraid of his Anger, as of his Inconstancy; do they imagine that their Lovers suspect their Fidelity? they are directly drown'd in a Flood of Tears, and the strongest Imprecations become Guarantees of their Love; if they see that their Tears produce not the Effect which they proposed to themselves, they jump, as it were, into Fits of Despair; one would think their Lives in danger, and the Fury, with which they are animated, much to be dreaded: A Lover cannot possibly withstand the Marks of such a violent Passion; he's easily soft'en'd, acknowledges he was in the Wrong, and adds new Chains to the former.

THE Opera-Girls excel also in the Art of ruining their Lovers, by the Presents which they exact; this is a Science which they are intirely Mistresses of; they have made, of their Extorsions and Rapines, an Art which has its Rules: The old Singers, in the Chorus, are the Professors who teach the New-comers their Precepts and Maxims; when they would have a Diamond, a Gown, a Head-Suit of fine Lace, they artfully praise

the Jewels, or Clothes, belonging to some of their Friends. "The Marquis of \*\*\*\*, say they, "has made Miss *Hermance* a Present of a Diamond; and the Count of \*\*\*\*, has given Miss *Campourfi* a rich and costly Gown; these Women "are truly happy; I know not if it's their Fidelity that's thus rewarded, but were their Affection valued at a just Price, I believe their Lovers "might dispense with making them such Presents."

A MAN, very amorous, and afraid to be discarded, easily conceives the Meaning of this Discourse; and, next Day, sends his *Belle* a Gown of the same Stuff, with *Campourfi's*, which is a Precedent for all the Stage-Ladies, and becomes a general Tax, imposed upon the whole Corps of Lovers; nevertheless the Expence which they're at lays no Tie upon the Hearts of those Creatures; when Occasion offers, any Man, who is liberal, has Access to their Favours, when they can bestow them without the Knowledge of their Adorers, being unwilling to lose a constant Income, for a transient Gain; but when they are assured of Secrecy, or think themselves safe, a Bargain is speedily concluded.

MISS *Prevot*, a famous Dancer, had a Lover of a distinguished Rank, who loaded her with Favours: A Country Squire, lately arrived at *Paris*, saw her at the Opera, and fell desperately in Love with her; he went daily to see the Object of all his Wishes dance on the Stage, and daily his Wound increased, so that in a little Time he was reduced to a pitiful State; he shun'd all Company, that nothing might disturb his Thoughts from his Adorable, and had no Comfort, but in the Expectation of that happy Moment when this Angel was to make her Appearance; and when he lost Sight of her, he gave himself up to the deepest Melancholly: One of his Friends was importunate to know what

what was the Matter with him; and as it's a Sort of Ease to reveal ones Misfortunes to an intimate Friend, he confessed that Love was his Torment, and *Prevot* his Tormenter; adding, that the Impossibility of his ever being happy, made Life a Burthen to him. "Take Courage, said his Friend, your Distemper is not incurable; you can't, 'tis true, pretend to the sole Possession of your Mistress, kept by a Man of Quality, but if you can resolve to purchase one Night's Lodging, at the Rate of a hundred Guineas, I fancy your Ravisher will take Pity on you: I'm acquainted with one of the Actresses, who is her Friend; To-morrow I will talk to her, and am hopeful that Matters may be made up to your Satisfaction." The Squire agreed to all, the Negotiation was commenced, and, by the Dexterity of the artful Confident, encouraged with the Prospect of half a Dozen Pieces promised, brought to a happy Issue, to the Satisfaction of all Parties: The Dancer with the hundred good Guineas, and the Lover with free and uninterrupted Possession, from Nine at Night till the same Hour next Morning; after which he returned to the Country as happy as a King. The Success of this Adventure tempted the Nymph to make other Experiments of this Kind so frequently, that her Keeper, who had his Spies, was informed of her Infidelity, and abandoned her; she did all that was possible to recal him; and finding that nothing would do, had the Impudence to sue him for the Recovery of certain Sums, which she pretended were due to her; but the Interest and Credit of her Lover, stopp'd the Progress of this extraordinary Prosecution, and afterwards, by the Interposition of some Friends, the Affair was made up and stilled.

THOU must allow, that the Courtezans at *Rome* set no such Springs agoing; one Opera-Girl raises more Scandal, and commits more filching Tricks, than the whole Body of them put together. Happy they who have no Commerce with such bewitching Creatures, and whose Morals are not corrupted by their Company.

FAREWELL, my dear *Brito*; if thou makest any longer Stay at *Rome*, let me hear from thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I GAVE thee a particular Account, in my last Letter, of the different States of this Country, and endeavoured to give thee an exact Idea of the Clergy, the Magistrates, the Farmers of the Revenues, and the common People; I shall now entertain thee on the Subject of the Nobility and Courtiers; but, as my short Residence at *Paris* has not afforded me a thorough Knowledge of the Court, I thought it advisable to consult my Friend, the *Chevalier de Maisin*, on a Matter so delicate, and in which a Stranger is so apt to be mistaken; and therefore I begg'd that he would be pleased to favour me with his Sentiments, which he has done in a Memorial, to me very new, who always look'd upon the Character of a Courtier as a Thing impenetrable, and who cannot go into his Opinion, that it's as easy to read into the Heart of the most refined Courtier, as into that  
of



of a simple Citizen; but I send thee his Memorial, that thou may judge for thyself.

# REFLECTIONS *upon the* CHARACTERS of COURTIERS.

" 'TIS the general Opinion, at *Paris*, that the  
" Court is not to be known, but by laborious  
" Study, and a perfect Acquaintance with its  
" Ways. A Burgher of *St. Denis-Street* fancies,  
" that the Heart of a Man, who lives at *Versailles*,  
" who is often in the Royal Presence, and talks  
" with the Minister, is as impenetrable as the most  
" hidden Secrets of Nature; he hears it constantly  
" said, that Dissimulation is the Courtier's pecu-  
" liar Talent, and (as he's ignorant how easy a  
" Matter it is, when we know Men, to discover  
" the Passions by which they are sway'd) imagines  
" that there's no penetrating through this thin Dis-  
" guise.

" SEVERAL Persons, who know nothing of  
" the Court, but by Hear-say, or by the general  
" Pictures drawn in some Books which they have  
" read, are equally guilty of this Mistake; but a  
" short Experience discovers its Maxims, and lays  
" open the Characters of those that compose it.

" IT is with Courtiers as with other Men,  
" Nature has not formed their Bodies of a differ-  
" ent Clay, nor do their Souls spring from a  
" purer Source; Education has polish'd the Out-  
" side, but the Internal is the same.

" THE Town shares in the Vices and Virtues  
" of the Court; and whatever Form, Passions may  
" assume, they can't escape the Philosopher's Pe-  
" netration.

" TO have a just Idea of the Court, we must  
" place it in two different Lights, and then we  
" easily perceive that what appears to be an im-

“ penetrable Mystery, is the Effect of Prejudice,  
 “ which, representing Things above the Reach of  
 “ common Understanding, discourages our En-  
 “ quiry.

“ VIRTUE, Merit, Science, and Wit, shall  
 “ have the first Place in my Examination; and  
 “ next I shall take a View of the opposite Vices,  
 “ from which will result a Proof of the perfect  
 “ Resemblance amongst Men, in whatsoever State  
 “ Heaven has placed them; and from the Whole  
 “ we may conclude, that the Courtier’s Character  
 “ is defineable, as well as the private Man’s.

“ CARE is taken to inspire all the *French*,  
 “ born above the common Rank, with the same  
 “ Sentiments: Their Parents and Preceptors are  
 “ constantly sounding in their Ears, that Honour  
 “ is the most valuable Advantage; that Riches can  
 “ never repair the Loss of Reputation; that Death  
 “ is preferable to a dishonourable Life; and that  
 “ a Man of Worth, and a good Subject, must  
 “ love his King and Country. A Country Gen-  
 “ tleman, in explaining these Maxims to his Son,  
 “ is not so refin’d and polite, in the Choice of  
 “ Terms, as a young Duke or Peer’s Governor;  
 “ but he repeats them oftner, and is perhaps more  
 “ careful to have them put in Practice. Two  
 “ hundred thousand Livres, yearly Rent, to which  
 “ the Duke is Heir, is no prevailing Motive to  
 “ give him a better Relish for those salutary In-  
 “ structions, than the Nobleman who has but a  
 “ Competency, and who looks upon Virtue as a  
 “ Part of his Fortune: Thus Temper alone de-  
 “ cides which of the two shall acquire most Merit.

“ As to Wit and Learning, the Courtier, how-  
 “ ever rich, has no Advantage over a private Man:  
 “ A Citizen causes his Son to study under the ablest  
 “ Rhetoricians in the Kingdom without any Cost,  
 “ the publick Schools being open to all. The  
 Liveliness

“ Liveliness of Genius, the Disposition to Learning, are the only Things that dispose a young Man to make a successful Progress in the *Belles Lettres*: Ten Philosophers will never be able to make a Geometrician of a stupid Marquis; and many Masters have made ingenious Men of a Cobler’s \*, and Haberdasher of Hats †, Sons.

“ CONSIDERING the Commodities which Fathers have in this Kingdom, for the Instruction of their Children, I can’t allow myself to think that Education can be brought as an Argument to prove, that a Courtier has more Merit and Science than a private Man, who never saw the King, nor the Ministers; if this Fact can be established, the Prepossession of more Wit and more Delicacy to be found at Court, than in the City, cannot stand; and it must be allowed that a Man’s Taste, improven by good Books, and by the Assistance of an able Master, to give it the finishing Touch, has no Occasion to dance Attendance for six Hours every Morning, in a Minister’s Anti-chamber, to shew his Shapes, after Dinner, at the *Tuilleries*, and to act the Fop at Night in the Players Dressing-Room; Experience is the best Mistress to shew what Evidence this Position bears.

“ AMONG the superior Genius’s, and eminent Men, who appeared in *Louis XIVth’s* Reign, not only in Literature, but in the Art of War, Posterity will scarce know the Names of five or six who, born in a high Rank, owed their Grandeur only to their Birth; but in remotest Ages, the Actions of the great *Condé* will be read with astonishment, *Turenne’s* admirable Conduct look’d into with Care, and the Duke of *Vendome* propos’d as a Pattern for Generals.

“ But

\* *Rousseau.* † *La Motte.*

“ But then we may put in the opposite Scale, to  
 “ those few immortal Heroes, that Crowd of  
 “ great Men, who raised themselves intirely by  
 “ their Merit; such as *Catinat*, *Vauban*, *Lauba-*  
 “ *nie*, *Louvois*, *Colbert*, and in fine, the Marshal  
 “ *Villars*, as useful to *France*, as *Hannibal*’s Van-  
 “ quisher was to his Country.

“ IF from Virtue and Valour we pass to Ge-  
 “ nius, scarce will we find two Writers at Court:  
 “ Shall *Bussy*, and *Rochefoucolt*, ballance *Corneille*,  
 “ *Boileau*, *Racine*, *La Fontaine*, *Moliere*, *La Bru-*  
 “ *yere*, *Fontanelle*, *Renard*, and many others, whose  
 “ Names alone would form a Volume, only  
 “ mentioning those who have treated of Matters  
 “ relating to the *Belles Lettres*?

“ NONE can pretend that those Authors formed  
 “ their Genius at Court; they are indebted to them-  
 “ selves only, and to their own Talents. When  
 “ *Corneille* composed the *Cid*, the *Horace*’s, *Cin-*  
 “ *na*, and *Pompey*, and extricated the *French Stage*  
 “ from the Confusion under which it laboured,  
 “ he consulted the *Latin Authors*, studied the *Au-*  
 “ *gustan Wits*, and despised the modish *Petit-Maitre*  
 “ Genius. *Racine* formed the Plans of most of  
 “ his Tragedies from *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*;  
 “ and if he knew so well to move and touch the  
 “ Heart, he was very sensible that he owed this  
 “ Talent to Nature. *Moliere* was more obliged  
 “ to the Court for many Originals with which  
 “ it furnished him; but the City was not wanting,  
 “ since his best Pieces are modelled on private  
 “ Mens Characters in *Paris*, and other Parts of  
 “ the Kingdom; such as his *Tartuffe*, *L’ecole des*  
 “ *Femmes*, *Les precieuses Ridicules*, *Les Femmes*  
 “ *Savantes*.

“ WIT is the Gift of Heaven, which neither  
 “ Birth nor Quality can purchase for those on  
 “ whom God has not thought fit to bestow it; so  
 “ that



“ that when a Citizen has had a suitable Education, when he has been trained up by People of  
“ a solid and delicate Taste, what should hinder  
“ him from reaping as much Benefit from his  
“ Master’s Lessons, as the Son of a King? and  
“ thus Genius and Merit are not restricted to a  
“ certain Class of Men, but equally the Privilege  
“ of many.

“ LET us now see if the Man of Quality has  
“ the Advantage of being less liable to Vice. I  
“ have already made it appear, at the Beginning of  
“ these Reflections, that, by the Principles inspir’d  
“ into Youth, the same Precepts are explained  
“ and recommended to the Burghers, as to the  
“ Nobility; so that it only now remains to en-  
“ quire which of the States are most expos’d to  
“ Temptation.

“ A PARISIAN, who lives contented in his  
“ own House, on the moderate Patrimony re-  
“ ceived from his Ancestors, and who is neither  
“ pitifully sordid, nor extravagantly lavish, is he  
“ in the same Danger of going a-stray, as a Noble-  
“ man, whose yearly Revenue of an hundred thou-  
“ sand Crowns is not sufficient for six Months Ex-  
“ pences? He spends fifty thousand Crowns more  
“ than his Income, and with immense Riches, is  
“ poorer than he who has but a thousand Crowns,  
“ and can make it do. An honest Competency is  
“ exempted from the Meanesses of Poverty, and  
“ the Extravagancies of Riches.

“ A MAN who can restrict himself, and be  
“ contented, despises that dignified Name, or Em-  
“ ployment, which gives a Privilege to refuse the  
“ Payment of a just Debt; he has no Crowds of  
“ Taylors and Sadlers haunting him for Payment  
“ of their Bills, nor thirty Domesticks, nourish’d  
“ with other Peoples Money, teasing him for  
“ their Wages; he scorns to flatter a Farmer-  
“ General,

“ General, to share in the Spoils of his Country,  
“ with which this blood-thirsty Leech is glutted.

“ IF it be then true, that the Nobleman, with  
“ all his Quality, has neither more Wit nor more  
“ Virtue, than the plain Citizen, and that he is  
“ more exposed to Passions, why should we be at  
“ a Loss to find him out? Is it because of that  
“ deep Dissimulation, said to be the distinguishing  
“ Talent of a Court? But is not the same Dis-  
“ simulation found in the City? and, as in it,  
“ Men are less influenc’d by Passions, one would  
“ think that they might the more easily lay a  
“ Constraint upon themselves.

“ NOTWITHSTANDING the feigned Ca-  
“ resses, the repeated Embraces, and the finish’d  
“ Complements, which the Courtiers bestow on  
“ each other, there’s none of them but knows  
“ that they are meer Words of course, Court  
“ Holy-water, thrown to deceive. Court-Dissi-  
“ mulation is rather the Effect of Habit than of  
“ Judgment; and such a Man may be found,  
“ who has the Character of a great Politician,  
“ and who never knew how he acquired that Re-  
“ putation. In all States, Men are pretty much  
“ the same; consequently, Philosophers can easily  
“ see through the Veil that covers the secret Re-  
“ cesses of a Nobleman’s Heart; and I am of  
“ Opinion, that my Remarks, on their different  
“ Characters, will be found to be just.

“ I DISTINGUISH the Courtiers into three  
“ Classes; the first are to be respected; the second  
“ have but a moderate Genius; and the last have  
“ nothing in common with other Men, but  
“ Clothes, Equipages, and Domesticks.

“ THE Number of the Nobility, endow’d with  
“ distinguish’d Merit, is the least considerable; yet  
“ there are several worthy of the general Esteem,  
“ who are not intoxicated with vain Glory: They  
“ confine

“ confine not Wit and Merit to Birth; they cultivate the *Belles Lettres*, and eagerly court the Approbation and Acquaintance of eminent Men.

“ ONE \* of them applies himself to Philosophy: Learned only for himself; and, careful to conceal his Knowledge, he’s, in his Closet, as good a Metaphysician, as a tender Lover with his Mistress.

“ ANOTHER †, of a lively, sound Wit, tho’ as yet but young, does Honour to his Place among the forty brightest Genius’s of the Kingdom.

“ A THIRD ‡ is the Protector of Liberal Arts; and, as the Sciences are link’d together, is Master of them all.

“ ANOTHER \*\* has a delicate Taste, and seasons Wit with Judgment.

“ AMONG the illustrious Courtiers, the Nephew § of a great Minister holds a distinguish’d Rank, and to a sprightly Wit joins a graceful Person.

“ THE second Class of Courtiers is more numerous than the first; it is composed of those, who, with the Advantage of knowing the World, and the reading of some Romances, endeavour (by being reserved in Discourse, by smiling *a propos*, and by a borrowed Sally rightly timed) to acquire the Reputation of Wits; thus they impose upon the Ignorant, who compose the third Class.

“ THE whole Merit of this lowest Class consists in knowing the principal Growths of the richest Champaign Wines, to be able to give a distinct Account of the Adventures and Intrigues of some Women, and to know what Opera is to be acted next Month; and some of them  
“ even

\* Count Forcalquier. † Duke of Villars. ‡ Duke of Mortimar,

\*\* Duke of Vaujour. § Duke of Richelieu,

“ even extend their Knowledge so far, as to read  
 “ the *Mercure-Gallant*: Their Lives are as uni-  
 “ form as the Course of the Sun; in the Morn-  
 “ ing, they repair to the Minister’s Levee, and  
 “ spend the rest of the Day at Table, Gaming,  
 “ or at the Theatres; they’re seldom absent from  
 “ the King’s Supper, from which they go to their  
 “ own, and sit out the Night.

“ THE most shining Actions of the Day, may  
 “ be reduced to a few Bows made with a good  
 “ Grace; some soft and pretty Glances of the  
 “ Eye; and if to such rare Qualities, they add a  
 “ Verse or two of a drunken Catch, sung *a petit*  
 “ *Pas* \*, ’tis then they look down with Pity on  
 “ the unhappy Mortals who are not endowed  
 “ with such extraordinary Talents: The Court is  
 “ the only Modeller of Taste, and they the Mem-  
 “ bers that compose it; so that every Man who  
 “ cannot adorn his Name with a Title, is de-  
 “ barred, under severe Penalties, from pretend-  
 “ ing to Wit or Judgment.

“ WHATEVER Difference there may be in  
 “ the three Characters which I have been describ-  
 “ ing, yet they all agree in their Endeavours of  
 “ pleasing the Sovereign.

“ A COURTIER may be called a *Cameleon*,  
 “ or his Master’s Ape; sad, gay, devout, de-  
 “ bauch’d, and, in one Word, a slavish Imitator  
 “ of his Prince’s Virtues and Faults; so that  
 “ one would think a thousand Bodies were ani-  
 “ mated by the same Spirit.

“ THERE\* are, besides these, many at Court  
 “ that must not be confounded with the Crowd  
 “ of Courtiers, such whose Employments oblige  
 “ to be near the King’s Person; this is a State  
 “ to be distinguished from the Courtier who has  
 “ no

\* Softly.



“no Business; Merit has fallen to the Lot of the  
 “latter; and the Affairs, to which their Em-  
 “ployments subject them, require that Capacity  
 “and Experience should join Hands.”

I HOPE, dear *Isaac*, these Reflections will be agreeable to thee; now and then I shall make my Application to the *Chevalier de Maisin* for his Assistance, and particularly in Matters which I cannot dive into as he.

ADIEU, my dear *Isaac*; and may Heaven heap on thee its Blessings.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I PROMISED, in my last Letter, to entertain thee on the Subject of the Ministers, Secretaries of State, and other Persons, whose Employments oblige them to attend the Court, but not as Courtiers.

THE Kings of *France*, for most Part, raise none to the Ministry, but Men of a superior Genius, and intirely devoted to them; nor do they allow them that despotick Power which the Sultans grant to the Vizirs. The *French* Monarchs take Ministers to assist them in the Dispatch of Business, but not as Partners in their Power: The Minister is not only tied up from putting any Person to Death by his own Authority, but is obliged to give the King an Account of the Orders issued out by him for taking up any private Person of Distinction.

tion. At *Constantinople*, a Vizir may, with Freedom, put a Man to Death who displeases him; but at *Paris* the King himself uses no such tyrannical Power; when any of his Subjects has committed a capital Crime, he is tried and condemned by Judges.

FROM *Henry IVth's* Time, to this Day, the Persons employed in the Ministry have been, almost to a Man, endowed with a superior Genius; the Ecclesiastical Order has furnish'd the greatest and most Illustrious\*. In the Reign of *Louis XIII.* Cardinal *Richelieu* (a Man of a great Soul, a superior Genius, grand and generous in Prosperity, intrepid in Adversity, and, notwithstanding his Function, as good a General in the Field, as an able Minister in his Closet; a warm Friend, an implacable Enemy, and a zealous Lover of Arts and Sciences) began to lay the Foundation of *Louis XIVth's* Grandeur.

CARDINAL *Mazarin* had the Charge of this young Monarch's Education, and rendered him Services which the Prince never forgot: This Minister had not all the Virtues of the Cardinal *Richelieu*, his Predecessor, nor had he, on the other Hand, his Failings; he lived in troublesome and factious Times, and was only supported by the Authority of a King, as yet a Minor; he had the Princes of the Blood, and almost all the Grandees of the Kingdom, in Opposition to him; he did by his refined Politicks, what the Cardinal *Richelieu* would have done by his Resolution; and, after many Crosses, and Misfortunes, he died regretted by his Master, feared by his Enemies, and esteem'd by those who hated him most.

MERIT

\* The Reader, no Doubt, perceives that in the Number of those able Ministers, there was no Intention of including *Chamillard*, and the Cardinal *du Bois*.

MERIT alone raised *Colbert* and *Louvois* to the Rank which they possessed; while they lived they were Enemies to one another, and this Enmity contributed to their Master's Happiness; they strove who should have the Precedency in his Esteem, and this Emulation made them exert themselves to the utmost of their Power in the Employments of their Ministry: Watchful of one another, they were a Spur to each other; the one\* was highly skill'd in Military Affairs, and expert in foreign Negotiations; the other†, thoroughly versed in the Business of the Revenue, and interior Affairs of the Nation, was the Protector of Arts and Sciences; both inimitable in their Qualities; and such Talents united, would have produced a perfect Minister.

HE who now holds the Reins of Government, is called the *Cardinal Fleury*: I lye under no Obligation to flatter him, but Truth obliges me to say that few are more deserving of sincere Praises; he formed the Manners of his Sovereign from his very Infancy, and has made, of the greatest King in the World, a Man of the greatest Honour and Honesty; a Character seldom found in Princes, who often think Honesty, Piety, and Candour, ridiculous Virtues: All *Europe* has done him the Justice which he deserves; and all his Enemies are forced to acknowledge that since Cardinal *Richelieu*, never was the Government of *France* conducted with so much Secrecy, Prudence, and Happiness.

THERE are other Ministers, of an inferior Rank, called *Secretaries of State*, and these Places are generally possessed by Men of superior Genius; they endeavour to make Choice among the ablest Statesmen, of Persons qualified for such important Posts. The Necessity there is that he who is plac'd

in this high Station should be capable to support the Weight of Affairs, hinders the Sovereigns from chusing as Fancy, or Friendship, dictates.

THE Courtiers, in general, are as mean and cringing before the Ministers, as they are proud and haughty towards their Inferiors: All their Pride cannot prevail with them to pass any where else but in an Anti-chamber, or a Gallery, the greatest Part of their Time, and this Way of Life becomes familiar by Custom; 'tis true that they amply revenge themselves on those who are so unhappy as to depend upon them, for the Mortification of cringing to others; and, in the City, their haughty, ridiculous, and insupportable Airs, indemnify them for what they suffer at *Verfailles*.

WHATEVER Vanity a Grandee may assume, he looks little at Court, the Royal Majesty eclipses all other Grandeurs: When a private Man is under some violent Fits of Ambition, to be cur'd of that Distemper, let him only go to the King's Supper, where he may see those whose Ranks and Honours he so much envies, appear in the most humble Manner, and much different from what he sees them elsewhere; and, if he makes but the least Reflection, he will be far from envying the poor Happiness of lording it for one Half of the Day, to be a Slave the other.

THE Presence of the Prince, or of the Prime Minister, makes such an Alteration on the Features and Physiognomy of many Courtiers, that they can scarce be known; the more they are naturally proud and haughty, the greater Abjection is painted on their Countenances; the Constraint which they suffer, and their Grandeur annihilated, augments their Confusion. If we should happen to meet with a Courtier any where but in the Royal Presence, a Nod is all the Salutation that can be expected; he calls, talks, and asks Questions, without



out so much as deigning to look at you, and, by his imperious and lofty Tone, teaches you to know your Distance: Surrounded by a Crowd, and in the Midst of the Circle, he dictates, approves, condemns, takes a Pinch, pulls out his Watch, and harrangues on his Equipage: The Prince by chance appears, and his Presence in a Moment dissipates all his ridiculous Grandeur; the *Proteus* changes his Form, depresses his Voice, and grows humble; but, do's the Sovereign retire? he assumes his old Shape, stands a tip-toe, raises his Shoulders, and dictates a-new; confident with Men of no Genius, as he is bashful and sottish with People of Understanding; he discourses of War to a Clergyman, of Mathematicks and Fortification to a Lawyer, and of Philosophy to an Officer. This Character, full of Vanity and Presumption, is one of the principal Reasons why the Ministers are so cautious and reserved with the Crowd of Courtiers; they would soon lose their Authority, were they less attentive to make them sensible of its Extent; an honest Familiarity cannot safely be used with a Man who is not capable of a Medium, but must either cringe like a Slave, or be a Grand Mogul.

THE *Mahometans* have as much Regard and Respect for their Ministers as the *French*, but never stoop to such low base Flatteries as the People in this Country; whatever Power a Vizir may have, and whatever Precedency his Post may give him, he finds no mean and servile Sycophants among the inferior Officers; they render him, 'tis true, the Honours that are due, but in their Submissions preserve an Air of Grandeur, temper'd with Modesty; and thus the *Turks*, in all their Actions, observe a certain Decency, which must give the World a favourable Opinion of them.

As there's an infinite Difference betwixt the *French* and *Ottoman* Courts, were we to draw the Picture of a *French* Courtier at *Constantinople*, the Piece would appear monstrous, and out of Nature. Those whose Offices and Employments keep them near the Person of the Sultan, are never admitted into his Presence, but when the Affairs of their Posts require it. That Crowd of Eunuchs, Capigis, Bostangis, and other Persons appointed for the Service of the Seraglio, is nothing but a Medley of Domesticks and Guards, and therefore it may be said that no Courtier constantly attends the Grand Signior: Sometimes he chuses, amongst his Vizirs, or Bathaws, one or two Favourites, who are the only Persons that see him, unless when the Service of the State requires the Attendance of other Ministers; so that his whole Court consists of black Eunuchs, some Mutes and Dwarfs; as for Ladies, there are perhaps as many as in *France*, but they may be rather called the Slaves of two or three Favourites, than their Companions and Equals.

THERE'S something very melancholy and solitary in the Sultans Manner of Life; shut up in their Palace, and seldom seen by the People, but upon extraordinary Occasions, they're Slaves to their own Grandeur, and may be compared to the *Nazarene* Idols, formerly mention'd, who must not go out of their Cases but by the Permission of their Guardians.

THE *French* Monarchs live in a very different Manner; they eat in publick, shew themselves as a private Man, and speak to those of their Subjects whom they love: As they know that they are infinitely above the Highest, and most Qualified of the Kingdom, they disdain the ridiculous Vanity of affecting a Ceremonial, only troublesome, and in no wise conducive to augment their  
Authority,

Authority, which is of greater Extent than that of the Sultans, tho' less conspicuous; nor does it dread the Shocks to which the Grand Signior's despotick Power is exposed.

THE Majesty of the Throne, sully'd by Affronts put upon the Persons of Sovereigns, is a Practice unknown in this Country; whatever Rebellions happen'd in the Kingdom, the Prince's Person was still respected\*; and even those who took up Arms against him gave out, that they had no Design against his Person or Authority; their Crimes were cover'd with the Pretext of defending Religion, or of saving themselves from the Oppressions of the Militry. The Janizaries at *Constantinople*, in their first Fits of Rage, have even dishonour'd the royal *Ottoman* Blood, for which they have so profound a Veneration: The Infamies which that insolent Militia committed on the Person of the unfortunate *Osman*, stirr'd up one Part of the Empire; and the Blood of ten thousand Janizaries could scarce satisfy the Indignation of that unhappy Prince's Friends.

I HAVE often reflected on what might occasion such frequent Commotions and Rebellions; and I can see nothing that contributes so much as the arbitrary Power of the Sultans. The Grand Signior calls no Council for laying on a Tax, nor gives himself the Trouble to see it register'd in the Assembly of the Cadis; he orders without advising, and the Grand Vizir executes his Commands; and thus the People make him the Author of their Misery, and carry their Hatred and Resentment no higher. IN

\* This wants to be explained; for the *Jacobin* Friar, who assassinated *Henry III.* and the *Jesuit* *Guignard*, *John Chastel*, and *Ravaillac*, who conspired against the Life of *Henry IV.* had no great Regard to the Persons of their Sovereigns; it must therefore be supposed, that *Aaron Monceca* only means the Heads of the different Parties.



IN monarchical Kingdoms, the Hatred of the People seldom reaches the Monarch; fifty different Objects stop it in its Way; Financers, Undertakers, Farmers-General, Counsellors of State, and the Ministers, are the Persons charged with the publick Calamities: When the Odium falls on all these different Subjects, it seldom extends to the criminal Excesses of attempting upon the Lives or Liberty of the Sultans. I begg'd of thee to let me know if *Osman* Bashaw was dead, but have not heard from thee on that Head, though I am curious to know his Fate: This Bashaw is look'd upon here as a very extraordinary Man: Some particular Men esteem him; but, generally, his Manners, Conduct, and Change of Religion, are blamed: Your fine Gentlemen agree, that he's a great Wit, but the Monks refuse him common Sense; and tho' there's a visible Partiality in their Sentence, yet it is pardonable for the Sake of the Crime which they condemn. A Man of Honour should live and die in the Religion in which he was born; nothing but Error can authorize a Change; no Crosses nor Misfortunes that we can meet with ought to shake us. Thou may'st remember I have told thee a hundred times, that the Crosses, Troubles, and Disgusts, which *Osman* has met with, were not, in my Way of Thinking, sufficient Motives for a Change of Religion. I am not ignorant that they who excuse him pretend that he's neither *Nazarene* nor *Mahometan*; but, granting this Point, it will still result that he should have done for Honour, what he did not for Religion.

FAREWELL, my dear *Isaac*, and may a numerous Posterity spring from thee.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*

LETTER





## LETTER XXIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I CAREFULLY read over the Memorial of *Ofman* Bathaw's Secretary, and in it I could see, as thou did'st, how far the *Nazarenes* and *Mahometans* are transported with Hatred against us; there is nothing however so easie as to answer the Objections brought against us upon the Interruption of our Ceremonies and the Cessation of Circumcision in *Spain*.

THE chief of our Precepts, founded on the Law of Nature, permits us to preserve our Lives by such Methods and Precautions as do not directly attack the Divinity; and our Doctors have a Power of dispensing with Customs, in Cases of Necessity: Religion consists not in Externals, but in Faith, Belief, and the Sentiments of the Mind; Ceremonies, 'tis true, ought to be observed, when it can be done without endangering our own, and the Lives of a thousand Innocents; but when such evident Danger is the Consequence, the Use of them may be suspended; not so with respect to the Fundamentals of Religion; nothing can or ought to make us withdraw our Obedience, even the most cruel and most rigorous Tortures. When, for Instance, a *Jew* is cited before the tyrannical Tribunal of the Inquisition, however dangerous it may be for him to confess his Religion, he ought to glory in owning it; the Majesty of the Almighty would be offended with a Lye, and by a base truckling Cowardice. Can a Son disown his

his Father, and a Father to whom he is indebted for so many Favours? But God does not require that we should rashly run in the Face of Torments; and condemn that blind Zeal, which throws away a Life committed to our Charge. We see several Examples in our Books, which prove the Truth of my Opinion. Our Fathers, during their Captivity, inviolably preserved their fundamental Principles; nevertheless, they were obliged to abandon, and to suspend, many Precepts of their ancient Discipline; nay, they ow'd their Preservation to the Violation of them; and the *Jewish* People owed their Safety to *Esther*, when she became *Ahasuerus's* Wife, tho' 'tis one of our principal, and most inviolable Customs, not to mix, by Alliances, the Blood of *Israel* with the impure Blood of Infidels; whatever Reluctance *Esther* might have to approach the Bed of an idolatrous King, there was a Necessity for Obedience, otherwise the Refusal of that Honour would have precipitated the *Jews* into new Misfortunes: The Fear of those same Miseries, excuses the *Spanish Jews* from Circumcision; and I see no Reason why we may not use the same Privilege as our Forefathers, since we have more to fear than they had.

THE *Nazarenes* furnish us a thousand Examples of such Forecast, founded upon the Cessation of some of their Ceremonies: During the Persecutions under the *Roman* Emperors, many, fearful of Tortures and Death, fled into the Deserts, and there passed their Lives alone, and without the Society of any rational Creatures; some lived fifty and sixty Years without seeing any Mortal \*:

This

\* St. *Jerom* affirms, that St. *Paul* the Hermit lived sixty Years in a Desert, where he was miraculously fed by a Raven, which brought him every Day half a Loaf. *Eia, inquit Paulus,*

This Solitude, to which they retir'd, occasion'd a Cessation of all the principal Ceremonies, to which they pretend an inviolable Obligation. Where was their Assistance on the Sabbath-day at divine Service? How did they partake of the Sacraments of the Church? For many of them were not Priests, and were not qualified to perform the Functions, consequently, in their Retirement, they suspended the Exercise of all the Ceremonies; nevertheless, they have, in the Sequel, been admitted into the Number of Saints.

As to the Reproach cast upon us of having a Number of childish Customs, and which are not commanded by the fundamental Precepts of our Law, I will fairly acknowledge, that, by Length of Time, many useless Things have crept in amongst us; but have the *Nazarenes* a Right to criticise us; they, whose Religion is over-charg'd with so many unnecessary Ceremonies? In my former Letters I gave thee a Detail of some of them: The *Turks* have still less Reason to reproach us on that Head, since it is certain, that, in their Religion, a Chain of impertinent Ceremonies pass for fundamental Precepts. Is there any Thing so ridiculous as the Dancing and Whirling of a Dervis? As the Customs of burying the Dead in such a Manner, that the good Angels may

Paulus, *sexaginta jam Anni sunt, quod accipio dimidii semper Panis Fragmentum* \*. 'Tis certain, therefore, that there have been Saints who have not partipated of the Sacraments and Feasts of the Church, all their Life-time. The *Dominican Friars*, who wrote *Mary Magdalen's Life*, found out an Expedient for this Inconveniency, by telling us, that the Angels came every Day with the Communion to the holy Woman in her Grotto. *St. Jerom*, without having Recourse to Angels, might have made *St. Paul* communicate in the same Manner, by only supposing that a Part of the Loaf which the Raven brought him, had been consecrated by a Priest; to make the Lye a little greater, was but a Matter of Moon-shine.

\* *Hieronimi Epist. de vita Pauli Heremise. Libr. III.*



may the more easily get at them? And as the Pilgrimages of *Mecca* and *Medina*? As if God were to punish a Man in the other World, for not having travell'd six or seven hundred Leagues to visit another Man's Tomb, and as if Heaven were concerned in such a Visit.

IF we have useless Customs and Rites, it is a Failing in common with other Religions; and happy are those Doctors who can find Means to purge the Religion, which they profess, of them. As to this Heap of Superstitions in ours, I must frankly tell thee my Thoughts: Our Rabbies have introduced a great many Notions, which, in the Opinion of Philosophers, cast a Blemish upon our Law; though thou art thyself a Rabby, yet the Friendship and Familiarity betwixt us encourage me to use this Freedom; besides, thou rejectest most of those ridiculous Opinions, and if thou seemest to approve of any of them, it is rather out of regard to thy Brethren, than from a real Conviction.

WHAT can a Philosopher say or think, when he reads in our Authors\*, That God, in the Beginning of the World, created, on the fifth Day, two great Whales; that he preserves one of them to this very Day to sport and play with; and that the other is preserved from Corruption in Salt-water, to feast the Blessed at the last Day? Is it not giving a very bright and noble Idea of the Almighty to make him play with a Whale, as a Child of six Years old with a *Doll*? That supreme Being, whose Existence is without the Reach of Time; that infinite Being, which comprehends all, but cannot be contain'd, who is self-sufficient, and out of Nothing compleated the Creation, to be taken up with the Diversion of seeing one Fish mudling and frisking about in the Water, and in preserving

\* *Pirke Eliez.* Chap. IX. Pag. II.



preserving another to regale good People: The Thoughts of such Nonsense make me blush; had our Rabbies imagined that the Blessed were to be treated with the Nectar and Ambrosia of the Poets, such delicious Food and Juices, since they would have it that the Almighty was to make a Feast, had been much more polite, than to load his Table with a monstrous greasy Whale: There can be no other Reason assign'd for such a Bill of Fare, than that the larger the Fish, the better, for so many Guests, as probably would be there.

THE Notion entertain'd by several of our Doctors concerning the Etymology of *Eve's* Name\*, is more ridiculous still: They say it is deriv'd from the Word *Talk*; and add, very gravely and dogmatically, that of twelve Baskets full of Chit-Chat, which fell down from Heaven, the Women pick'd up nine! A Man of Sense and Reason is prejudiced against a Religion whose Depositories invent such Romances, and forge such Chimeras's.

THE Example of *Nazarenes* ought to be a Lesson to us: A Heap of extravagant and wild Notions, with which the Monks stuff'd their Books, was the first Cause why a Part of their Brethren separated from them: For a certain Time the People were Dupes to a thousand ridiculous Stories; there was not a Lay-Brother who did not publish some Works of his own composing, full of whimsical Ideas and Notions; the less they had of Common Sense, the silly ignorant People thought them the more mysterious.

THE Men of Sense, for some time, only laugh'd within themselves at these ridiculous Writings, but afterwards, Imposture and Cheat having been carried to an extravagant Height, Honour and Religion employed the Pens of many learned Men

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to

\* *Lexicon Hebr. Buxtorfij*, Pag. 228.

to put a Stop to the Torrent, by undeceiving the deluded People, which had a good Effect: But the Monks considering that a Discovery of their Tricks must be fatal to their Credit, used all Endeavours to prevent it; the first Step they took, was to get their Adversaries excluded from their Communion, and this, by the Credit of the Party with the Sovereign Pontife, was easily effected; but their Triumph on this Victory was of short Continuance, the Eyes of the Publick were open'd, they saw thorough the Cheat, and even some of their own Members contributed towards it; so that at last their Votaries were reduced to a few silly Women, and ignorant Men.

ONE \* of the principal Enemies, of those ridiculous Books, was surnamed *Le denicheur de Saints* †, because he turned more Saints out of Paradise, than twenty Pontives could put into it. The Monks were enraged at the presumptuous Authority which he assumed over the Blessed, and the more surpris'd, as he profess'd the same Faith with the Pontife, who had taken the most of them into his Protection; but all would not do, Remove was the Word; and, what added to their Mortification, the Adversary's Reasons of Ejection were so strong, that they even convinced many of the most obstinate *Nazarenes*, and procured him the Sovereign Pontife's Esteem. Thou'lt perhaps be curious to know something of the Lives of some of those illustrious Exiles.

ONE ‡ stood forty Years erect upon a Pillar as a Statue, and was allowed only the Privilege of Geese who stand on one Leg to ease the other. Before his Removal, he was invocated for Pains in the Hams.

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ANOTHER \* diverted himself with the Devil, whom he had under Command ; but *Old-Nick* having, one Day, taken a little more Liberty than came to his Share, had his Nose so squeez'd with a Pair of Pincers, that he would keep him no longer Company.

WERE I to give thee a List of all the degraded Saints, my Letter would swell to a Volume, but thou may judge of the rest by the two mentioned.

I COULD heartily wish that some of our Rabbies had the Art of this un-fainting *Nazarene*, we would probably owe him the Obligation of reducing our Religion to its primitive Purity, and of disarming our Enemies ; whatever Trouble, or Opposition, might attend his first Attempt, Truth would at last prevail, and we made sensible of the Benefit.

TAKE care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, and let my Sentiments be buried in thy Breast, lest, if known, they should draw upon me the Odium of the Simple and the Foolish. May *Israel's* God grant thee Wealth and Health.

\* *Danstan.*

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER XXV.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

TO-MORROW, or next Day, I resolve to be gone for *Genoa*, so that this is my last Letter from *Rome*. The modern Buildings which I have seen in this City yield neither in Taste nor Grandeur to the ancient Structures: The Pantheon,

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*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**



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formerly the Temple of the Gods, and now of the Saints, is the most entire Piece now extant of the *Roman* Antiquities. One of the Sovereign Pontife's Nephews having cunningly obtained Permission to carry away, during twenty-four Hours, some Stones out of the Circus of the famous Amphitheatre, employed near to three thousand Workmen and Labourers, who, in five or six Hours, destroyed a Part of that magnificent Edifice, and, had they not been stopp'd, would have intirely demolished it.

THIS is not the only Instance of Nepotism's being prejudicial to the City of *Rome*, for, as I have already told thee, she's continually exposed to the Depredations of covetous Nephews. The late Pontife was upon the Point of depriving *Italy*, and the whole Universe, of the most exquisite Pieces of Painting that the World could produce. The famous *Raphael*, who excelled in his Art, painted three Chambers in the Vatican\*, and his Drawings on the Walls are the Tapestries with which they are adorned. As some of the Subjects in the *Nazarene* Histories are borrowed from Antiquity, the Pontife was for effacing those Masterpieces, to give Place to the Story of a Couple of Monks who had been lately canonized†; and a Painter of *Benevento* was to have the Glory of destroying these admirable Pieces; but, as good Fortune would have it, some of the Cardinals, having got Notice of the Pontife's Intention, strenuously opposed the Design, and prevail'd on him at last, not to be more cruel to *Rome*, than the Barbarians who had formerly sack'd it.

THE *Trojan* and *Antonine* Pillars are among the most beautiful Things which the Revolutions  
and

\* Three Halls near to the little Rooms painted by *Raphael*.

† I have heard several People at *Rome* say, that this Pontife called *Raphael's* Pictures *Porcheria orditit*.

and Misfortunes of *Rome* have respected; on the Tops of them are placed the Statues of the two principal *Nazarene* Doctors, to whom the Pontives are supposed to be Successors in direct Line, and derive from them their Infallibility; but, what is pretty remarkable, one of those Doctors reprimanded the other, and none of them ever believed themselves infallible, on the contrary they expressly declare, in their Writings, that to God alone belonged such a Prerogative, and not to Man in the highest Station he possibly could attain to.

THE Security and Accuracy of the Pontifical Decrees, are in this Country the most essential Articles of Faith; and the Inquisition is extremely careful to support this Doctrine, when it lays hold of any who dare deny it: As it is a Tribunal inflexible, their Decisions generally terminate in Death; so that it's less dangerous to offend God at *Rome*, than the Pontife. A Wax-Candle, of the Value of a Testoon or two, burnt to the Honour of St. *Francis*, will atone for the most capital Crime; but should any Man presume to doubt whether the Sovereign Pontife can, by only extending two Fingers, at once purify a Million of Souls, he might lay his Account with being publickly, and with great Ceremony, committed to the Flames; and all for Conscience Sake.

THE Sovereign Pontives of the *Nazarenes* were formerly chose by the Suffrages of the People; but even then the Validity of Elections required the Concurrence and Confirmation of the Emperors \*; but in the Sequel the Case alter'd; and

Q 3

now

\* The Title of *Holiness*, now given to the Pope alone, was formerly every Bishop's Due. The Court of *Rome* is much to blame in assuming this Title as a Mark of Independance on Princes, for it is certainly evident, by all Histories, that for more than three hundred Years after *Constantine*, the Emperors of *Constantinople* always had the Right of confirming the Election

now some Pontives, cloath'd in Red \*, are invested with the sole Power of Election: They are some times much difficulted about the Man, being influenced by the different Princes, in whose Interests, or, rather, whose Creatures they are: For almost an Age they were so divided that each Party elected a Sovereign Pontife, so that there were two, and sometimes three chosen at a Time, who retired to the Dominions of the Princes, their Protectors, and their first Exercise every Morning was

tion of Popes. As to Title of *Holiness*, it was anciently given to all the Bishops. " This Word, says *Pasquier*, was specially ascribed to the Bishops: And *Sidonius*, in the 4th Book of his Epistles, speaks of the Election of a Bishop, in which there was great Intriguing. St. *Patianus*, and St. *Euphronius*, have at last, says he, elected St. *John*, a Person valuable for Honesty, Humanity, and good Nature. St. *Jerome*, writing to *Florentius*, says, St. *Evagrius*, the Priest, presents his Respects to you: And from thence it comes that when they spoke to the Bishops, they honour'd them with the Title of *Holiness*. Thus you find it expressly in all the Epistles of *Cassiodorus*, as often as *Theodorick*, *Athalarick*, *Theodasius*, or *Vitigius*, Kings of Italy, wrote to any Bishops of their Kingdom. St. *Gregory* writing to the Patriarchs of *Antioch*, makes some times use of these Words, *Vestra Beatitudo*; and, at other times, *Vestra Sanctitas*; to the Bishop of *Milan*, who had a considerable Post in Italy, *Vestra Sanctitas*; and to other common Bishops, *Vestra Fraternitas*. *Socrates*, in the 6th Book of his Ecclesiastical History, excuses himself for not honouring the Bishops, when he spoke of them, with the Epithet of *Sanctissimi*, or some other Title usually bestowed on them: On the contrary, *Theodoret*, through the whole Course of his History, never mentions Bishops without adding the Words *Sancti* or *Beati*, tho' they were then alive." *Pasquier*, *recherches de la France*, Liv. II. Chap. III. Pag. 157. Thus you have the Origin of that pompous Title of *Holiness*, of which the Court of *Rome* so loudly boasts: She won't allow of this, but tho' these Proofs are contested as invalid, I fancy she would be glad to have as valid ones to prove *Constantine's* pretended Donation,

\* The Cardinals,



was to excommunicate one another\*; at last it was decided in a general Council which was the true Sovereign Pontife, but it was at the same Time determined, that his Authority was inferior to that of the general Councils: This Decision was afterwards condemned, having only been receiv'd on the other Side of the Alps, and not in *Italy* or *Spain*.

THESE Electors of the Pontife are called Cardinals, and most of them Noblemen, or Sons of Princes; several of them remain about the Sovereigns, who are their Protectors; so that there's but a certain Number at *Rome*, who are very useful to the Inhabitants; the Money they spend being all that circulates among the People; what comes from foreign Countries is directly snapt up by the Priests and Monks; the Nephews and Ministers of the reigning Pontives have a large Share of it, and these Sums are either lock'd up in their Coffers, or sent to foreign Countries.

THE Fate of Cardinal *Coscia* may serve for an Example to future Favourites; they will be more careful to conceal their Riches, and more circumspect, lest they be called to an Account.

THIS *Coscia*, under the preceding Pontificate, made a Penny of every Thing; Honours, Dignities, Favours, &c. were all set up to Sale; and thou'lt easily judge how tractable he was on the

Article

\* I would gladly know what the Holy Ghost, the constant Inlightner of Popes, was doing at that time; was it inconsistent with itself, and did it undo by one Pope what it established by another? The Monk *Paul*, speaking of a Portmanteau's falling into the Water, in which were the Instruments sent from *Rome* to the Legates, who presided at the Council, said, "That the Spirit of God moved upon the Waters." *Spiritus Dei ferebatur super Aquas*. May it not be also said, that during the Western Schism it seemed to bring back the Chaos, and turn the World topsy-turvy. *Frigida pugnabant Calidis, humentia Siccis*: One Pope granted Indulgencies to the same Persons whom another excommunicated.

Article of Licences and Indulgences, he was not bounded to *Europe*, but wanted to carry on his Trade in all the known Parts of the World. The Pontife, whose Minister he was, happening to die, his Enemies, covetous of the Riches he had scraped together, attack'd him with all the Fury imaginable, and forced him, after some Years Imprisonment, to part with some of his ill-got Wealth.

IF the Custom of bringing Ministers to account from Pontificate to Pontificate were introduced, *Coscia's* Money would perhaps be transferred from Nephew to Nephew for four or five hundred Years.

THE Cardinals, and People of Quality, have magnificent Country-Seats near *Rome* (commonly called Vineyards) adorn'd with ancient and modern Statues, and with Paintings by the ablest Masters: The Villa *Borghese* is one of the most beautiful \*, and where a Traveller may have the Pleasure to see many curious Things; the Villa of the Princes *Pamphili* is also magnificent, but most of the Statues are maim'd and fractur'd, not by Time, or the Devastations of *Rome*, but by the inaccountable Folly of a Monk — Here's the Case.

PRINCE *Pamphili's* Father being seized with an uncommon Fit of Devotion, chose a Monk for his Director, according to the usual Custom of the *Nazarenes*, who think it impossible for a Man to go to Heaven without the Assistance of a Priest: This Monk, when he had gain'd such an Ascendant as he desired over his new Penitent, persuaded the Prince, that to facilitate his Salvation, it was absolutely necessary he should leave him some pious Legacies, to be employ'd in Alms to the poor *Indians*, for the Relief of Missionaries, and for propagating the Faith, &c. Some of the Domesticks, who had not list'd themselves under his

\* 'Tis here that are seen the fine Statues of *Seneca* expiring in the Bath, the Gladiator, and the Hermaphrodite,

his Direction, and who, he thought, had no good Will to his Order, were directly turned off; and even the Prince's Relations, who might thwart his Designs, were removed.

NOT content with an intire Conquest of all the living Things, whom he suspected in this Family, his Power must be extended even to Things inanimate; the Nudity of three or four hundred Statues in the Gardens, gave the Holy Man Offence, and made him charge the Prince with the Crime, who, notwithstanding the Heats in *Italy*, order'd them all to be cloath'd, and never more to appear naked, however unbecoming their Dress should be; accordingly Draperies of Plaster were laid over certain offensive Parts of those poor Statuary Folks, and their Bodies mangled with Incisions, to make the Plaster stick the faster: Five or six Months after this Expençe of new cloathing, Prince *Pamphili* dies; and his Son, willing to put things *in Statu quo*, ordered the Statues to be stripp'd of their cumbersome Vestments; but in the Operation several beautiful Parts, notwithstanding the Care that was taken, were maim'd, so that this bigotted Monk did more Mischief by his inconsiderate Zeal, than an Army of *Goths* and *Vandals*.

I OFTEN consider how much a Man, who allows himself to be governed by an extravagant Fanatick, is expos'd to act ridiculously: The over-stretch'd Zeal of Prince *Pamphili* puts me in mind of an Adventure that happened in this Country.

AN *Italian* Painter, named *Sebastian Conchi*, bought, for a *German* Prince, two Pictures done by *Giulio Romano*, the one representing the Rape of the *Sabines*, and the other *Cupid* and *Psyche*: A Monk, who was his Wife's Confessor, being curious to see her Husband's Pictures, she conducted him into the Painting-Room, at a Time when



when the Painter, unluckily, was gone out : Scarce had the Monk cast his Eyes on the two Pictures, but he bawled out like a Madman, " You'll be damn'd ! there's no Remission for you, " not even in *Articulo Mortis* ! no Absolution ! " no Absolution ! Wo's me, cried she, what " have I done ? What you have done, answer- " ed the Monk, you look upon those Pictures, " and allow your Husband to be employed in " such Work ? They are not done by him, said " she, but by another Painter. No Matter who " drew them, replied the zealous Director, there's " no Salvation for you, unless these obscene and " infamous Things be immediately defaced, and " tore to Pieces." The Woman, frighten'd with Hell, was preparing to put violent Hands on the Pictures, just as the Painter came in, who trembled at the Thoughts of this fine Project : The Prince, for whom they were, had paid two thousand Crowns for each of them, so that the Fury of this Monk would have quite ruined the poor *Sebastian Conchi*, had he tarried a few Minutes longer : He turned the Madman out of Doors, and ordered his Wife, at her Peril, never to set Foot in that Room again.

IN the Country where thou now art, my dear *Monceca*, thou hast frequent Opportunities, as well as I, of seeing the strange Effects of immoderate Devotion resembling Madness, yet methinks they should be less common in *France*, than *Italy*, where the Monks have infinitely more to say ; but as they are every where the same, in spite of Diffimulation and Constraint, some of their Follies will break out.

WHEN I arrive at *Genoa*, thou shalt hear from me ; I know not if I shall make any long Stay there, but I think of passing some time at *Turin*.  
Farewel,



Farewel, my dear *Monceca*; may thy Commerce prosper, and thy Riches increase.

*Rome*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXVI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

SO many serious Letters successively, without a Mixture of Gaiety, will throw thee into the Dumps, and, perhaps, thou'lt complain that I take so little care to season them: I would willingly join Pleasure to Profit, but the last Subjects I have been upon were too philosophical to admit of Jest. To please thee, I could wish that what drops from my Pen might present thee with those sprightly and happy Sallies peculiar to the *French*: Other Nations have, perhaps, more good Sense, and equal Learning; but, for the sparkling Vivacity of Wit, *English*, *Germans*, and all must yield.

BUT how the *French* come by this Advantage is a Mystery to me: Should we attribute it to Climate and Fancy that Imagination, like a Weather-Glass, rises more or less, according to the Degrees of Heat. What People in *Europe* ought to be more lively and sprightly than the *Portuguese*? and yet their Books, in general, are nothing but a confused, disorderly, and huge Pile of Theological and Philosophical Nonsense, or Romances filled with Enchantments, Combats, and Rapes: Such Chimeras proceed rather from a disorder'd than a lively Imagination. When the *Germans* labour'd under the Misfortune of a deprav'd Taste, some  
Monks,

Monks, and other Authors, wrote Books equally senseless, and yet the Difference between the Climates of those two Countries is very great.

IF the Air and Heat of the Sun were the Sources of Wit, we should see, in the same Country, almost the same Genius in every Individual. What Difference however betwixt the modern *Geeks* and learned *Athenians*? the People of the *Levant* give into wild and monstrous Notions; but can this be said of the Authors of ancient *Greece*? Where see we more Plainness, and, at the same Time, more Grandeur and Eloquence, than in *Demosthenes*? less Affectation, and more of Nature, than in *Euripides*? more of the Majestick and Sublime, than in *Homer*, and *Sophocles*? more Perspicuity, Conciseness, and Accuracy, than in *Xenophon*? those Authors lived in the same Country as the modern *Greek* and *Turkish* Poets, and *Sol* darted his Rays equally on both; yet what more extravagant than *Achmet Chelibi's* Poetry \*? or more impertinent than the Works of *Ibrahim*? which are nevertheless, look'd upon as the Oracles and Master-pieces of the Age.

GOOD Taste, Masters, Conversation, and Books, contribute to our Improvement in Wit; but still we're in the Mist to account for that Superiority of Fire and Vivacity in the *French* above other Nations.

THE *English* may justly boast of excellent Judgment, and of Authors who have distinguished themselves in all Kinds of Writing, and who, perhaps, out-do

\* A modern *Turkish* Poet, who composed several Poems in Praise of his Mistress. In one of his Pieces, which I heard him read in the Palace of *France*, when I was at *Constantinople*, he compared the Face of one of his *Bellés* to a Parterre enamell'd with a thousand Flowers, and her Glances to a scorching South Wind, that burns and destroys the richest Harvests. These were the Interpreter's Terms, but he assured us that the Original was more extravagant and bombast.

out-do the *French*, but then they fail in the gay and lively Manner of Expression.

THE *Germans* have produced Works of surprising Erudition, Books fit for the Learned, useful and good, but the agreeable is not their Talent.

To set my Notion in a clear Light, let me run the Parallel betwixt two Authors, to whose Works and Merit, my dear *Isaac*, thou'rt no Stranger; both esteemed by Nations who have a Value for Learning. *Locke* has written a Book which claims the Admiration of the Universe\*, for good Sense, Penetration, and strong Reasoning: A Temple and an Altar ought to be erected in Honour to this admirable Performance, where, upon certain Days, the Thomistick, Scotick, and Loyolick Philosophy, should be sacrificed in Barnt-Offering; nor would there be any great Harm should *Aristotle's* Commentators have the same Fate, and be deprived of the *Greek* Text.

WHATEVER Glory redounds to the Author (for whom I would have a Temple erected) for the Excellency of his Works, yet many are ignorant of their Merit; his sole View being to please Men of Learning, his Subjects are not treated in a gay, easy Manner, nor adapted to the Capacity of many, who can't bear any Thing that seems to them obscure and perplex'd. *Bayle* is the Man whose happy Talent has excelled in handling the sublimest Subjects, after the clearest, concisest, and gay Manner, so that his Writings, nervous, lively, and profoundly Learned, are within the Reach of the meanest Capacity: A Woman may learn more Natural Philosophy, and Metaphysicks, in his Thoughts on the Comets, than ten Professors ever taught in all their Lives.

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\* Tho' all the Works of the illustrious *Locke* are excellent, yet his *Essay on Human Understanding* excels.

THE more I endeavour to penetrate, my dear *Isaac*, into the Cause of the *French Vivacity*, the less I comprehend it; and I could wish thou would'st assist me with thy Conjectures, not doubting but that, in Travelling, thou hast the Advantage of extending thy Knowledge, and improving thy Ideas.

I HAVE nothing new to tell thee; for eight or ten Days past, *Paris* has made a Truce with Adventures, which, as it is the Theatre of Folly, Love and Gallantry, must be the more surprising: For this Bout thou must be contented with a pretty merry Adventure that happened sometime ago to an Opera-Girl, and which I learned from my Friend the *Chevalier de Maisin*.

A YOUNG Man, named the *Chevalier de S\*\*\**, Officer in the Regiment of C\*\*\*\*\*, fell in Love with one of the Opera-Girls, call'd *La petit-pas*: He was a handsome young Fellow, but, like many others, not over-loaded with Cash: Gold commonly is no Incumbrance to young Sparks; and yet, without this Mettle, Opera-Ladies are impregnable: The Difficulty of the Conquest, and the Desire of making it, inspired him with a pretty singular Expedient: He had never spoke to his Goddess, nor did she know him; his Heart had received the mortal Wound from the sweet Pipe and graceful Appearance of this *Stage-Venus*; and, as he was her Slave in Love, resolved to be such in every Respect, by entering into her Service as a Domestick, not doubting but that, some time or other, he should find an Opportunity of making himself known to Advantage: This Project appear'd highly reasonable, and the Scheme well laid down; and no Time was lost to put it in Execution: Accordingly he presented himself, was accepted, and, from a Captain in the Regiment of C\*\*\*\*\*, was metamorphosed into a Singing-Girl's principal



principal Lacquey. Nothing could be more exact, or more assiduous, than *Pierrot*; ever at a Call, and always on the Wing at the Word of Command; so that Madam was highly pleased with the Acquisition of her new Valet.

FOR five or six Days the Chevalier made no Advances in his Amour; and often the Happiness of seeing his Ravisher was interrupted by the Visits of Beaux, during which poor *Pierrot* was planted in an Anti-chamber, and his Ears grated with a thousand Things sadly mortifying to a passionate and tender Lover; but he was forced to swallow the Gudgeon: No Pay, no *Swiss*; no Gold, no Opera-Girl; true Proverbs both, and the last to his sad Experience; but at length *Cupid* had Pity on him; his Mistress was invited to Supper at a Country House near *Paris*; to which, attended by her faithful *Pierrot*, she went after the Opera; but how great was his Surprise, when he found that he who entertain'd was his own Lieutenant-Colonel? A perplexing Circumstance this; for if he absented, he risk'd the being turn'd off; and if he waited at Table, he was afraid of being discover'd; however, he resolved to risque the latter, hoping that, under his present Disguise, the Lieutenant-Colonel would not know him; but the Mask dropp'd, and the Colonel found out in *Pierrot* his noble Captain. *La petit-pas* was so well pleased with this ingenious Stratagem, that Master *Pierrot* was admitted to sit at Table, and, after Supper, re-conducted in Madam's Coach, and honour'd with a Share of her Ladyship's Bed that Night; who probably found him as agreeable a Lover, as he was a zealous Domestick; Enjoyment increased their Fondness, and our Lover's Happiness was undisturbed till the Moment he was obliged to return to his Garrison.

THERE have been Instances sometimes of Courtezans, emulous of Glory, and capable of a delicate Passion; and tho' this happens but seldom, yet the World is not without Examples of this Kind: When once their Hearts are touch'd, they love more passionately than other Women: *Cupid*, having their Byasss to Debauchery, and the Habit contracted in it to surmount, must drive his Arrows deep in their Hearts; so that they are either insensible, or love to Excess, knowing no Medium. This Country affords Instances of Women, who, from the Height of Debauchery, have been brought to a regular Behaviour, and this happy Change wholly owing to Love, which had more persuasive Rhetorick than twenty Preachers Sermons. An Author \*, who has imitated *Æsop*, and may be said to be as original as his Model, tells the Story of a *Roman* Courtezan, who paid the Tribute of a tender Heart to Love; the same Fate has happen'd to many others; and if we can give Credit to Antiquity, the famous Courtezan *Lais* lavish'd Favours on *Diogenes*, which she sold at a high Rate to the *Greeks* of greatest Distinction †.

TAKE Care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, and be as punctual in thy Answers as possible.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

#### LETTER

\* *Fontaine*. † One of *Aristippus's* Domesticks, sorry to see his Master lay out such Sums upon *Lais* the Courtezan, took the Liberty to tell him, that the *Cynic Diogenes* obtained the same Favours gratis, which cost him so much Money. I pay her, answered *Aristippus*, not that she may not lie with others, but that she may lie with me—

Ονειδίζμενος ὑπὸ οἰκέτοιο, ὅτι σὺ μὲν αὐτῇ τοσούτον ἀργύριον δίδως ἢ δὲ προῖκα Διογένει πῶ κυνὶ συγκυλίσται ἀπεκρίνατο, ἐγὼ Λαΐδι χορηγῶ πολλά, ἵνα αὐτὸς αὐτῆς ἀπολαύω· οὐχ' ἵνα μὴ ἄλλος. *Athen. Deipn. Lib. XIII. pag. 188.*



## LETTER XXVII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

HAVING lately given thee my Remarks on the Character of the Nobility, Courtiers, and Clergy, I shall in this Letter endeavour to give thee a just Idea of the People.

THEY are not Slaves in this Kingdom, as in *Germany*, nor free as in *England*; their Situation is a Medium betwixt the two, neither exposed to the Oppressions of some petty Tyrants, nor indulged in the Insolencies and Brutalities to which the Populace has a natural Tendency: The too extensive Privileges of the *English*, render them insupportably arrogant: The common People, intoxicated with their Independancy, and accustom'd to carry every thing with a high Hand, are as apt, upon any Disgust, to cause Confusions in the State by revolting, as the Janisaries.

IN *France*, the People give that Obedience which is due to the Sovereign, and are the King's Subjects, without being Slaves to the Nobility; a Lord of the Manor has no Right to the Effects or Persons of his Vassals; if they pay their Rents and Tithes, &c. he must not molest them; they are the King's Subjects, and under his Protection, and if any Violence should be offer'd, or any Injustice done them, they have Recourse to Law, and it often happens, that the Landlord is cast by his Tenant.

WHATEVER Care is taken in this Country to prevent the People from being oppress'd by the Nobility,

Nobility, yet they are not exempted from the Respect due to Persons whose Birth gives them a distinguish'd Rank; they are taught to preserve the Regard which is due to them, and tho' they are not to be Slaves, yet they must observe Decency, and a certain Subordination necessary to the Peace and Tranquility of the State.

AN exorbitant Power in the People, is an Extreme no less dangerous than despotick Power in a King. I am perswaded, my dear *Isaac*, that, to maintain Harmony in a Kingdom, "There must be  
" a settled Correspondence, or a reciprocal Return  
" of Duties betwixt the Sovereign and the Sub-  
" jects \*;" but it's my Opinion, that the Clemency, Equity, and Justice, which a Prince ought to have, should by no means diminish the Subordination and Obedience of the People.

IF a good King ought to be the Father of his Subjects, they, in their Turns, ought to be submissive as Children, the Duties on both Sides being equally sacred; so see we Success, Prosperity, and Plenty attending the Monarchy where the Interests of the Prince and People are thus blended.

WHEN the Titles of *Grand, August, Invincible*, are given to a Sovereign, I take Ambition to be the Source from whence they flow, and look upon them as secret Wounds, which the State feels by the Expence the Prince has been at to acquire this ill-founded Glory.

WHEN a Sovereign is called the Father of his People, the very Title sounds his Panegyrick, and contains, in itself, all the Qualities necessary for his making Men happy.

TRUE Grandeur is founded on Justice; this Maxim, tho' applicable to all Mankind, regards Princes

\* There is, says the wise *La Bruyere*, a Commerce, or a return of Duties, betwixt the Sovereign and the Subjects, but which are the most painful and troublesome, I don't pretend to determine,



Princes more than private Men. What Justice is there in making that Rank and Birth, in which Heaven has placed them, serve to render Millions miserable?

THERE are Sovereigns who model their Severities into Maxims, and their Tyranny into an Art; they fancy that a Part of their imaginary Glory is owing to their Hardness of Heart, and Want of Compassion for Mankind, and therefore, instead of being sensible of the Horror of their Conduct, applaud themselves for it. These blind Princes are the more to be pitied, because it's next to an Impossibility that they ever can perceive their Error; for those who are about them (vile Slaves to their Grandeur, and constant flatterers of their Vices) take care not to ruffle them with troublesome Truths.

FEW have such Occasion for wholesome Advice as Sovereigns, who often draw upon themselves the publick Hatred, by Accidents and Occasions, which might have been avoided, had they been made sensible of their Faults: But the Favourites and Courtiers, more attentive to their own Fortunes, than to their Master's Glory, give themselves no Trouble to prevent his taking wrong Measures, a friendly and sincere Advice at Court being a dangerous Attempt.

IF Princes knew how much their lawful Prerogatives were bounded, they would look upon Royalty as a State more painful than pleasant, and more gay than solid: If they're the chief Judges of the Subjects, they are their Fathers too: Such are the Titles of their Institution, and they regulate the Duties to which they are subjected, as well as the Measure of their Power. As Judges, the Observation of the Laws must be their constant Care; and as Fathers, the Happiness of the People their  
constant

constant Study, and not to sacrifice their Lives and Fortunes for the empty Pleasure of Conquest.

IF we seriously reflected on the Weakness and Frailty of Mankind, it must be surprising that any one should fancy himself intitled to command all the rest. God formerly gave Kings to *Israel* in his Wrath.

A ROYAL Infant in the Cradle is rever'd as a God the Moment of his Birth: Sometimes he has scarce attained to the Age of Reason, but he determines the Fate of many Millions, Victims to his Caprice: If he loves War, infinite Numbers of his Subjects must be thrown away; if he is magnificent, and has a Taste for fine Palaces, and publick Structures, they must be ruin'd: Thus they are always doom'd to be the Victims of his different Whimsies. He looks upon the Loss of eight or ten thousand Men, as of eight or nine hundred thousand Livers, for the Purchase of a Place; and if he spares their Lives, it is not upon their Accounts, but that he won't make the Purchase at a dearer Rate than he thinks it deserves.

A PHILOSOPHER is strangely surpris'd to think of a hundred thousand Men falling upon an equal Number, meerly to gratify the Ambition of two Persons. Is there any thing so extraordinary as to see two hundred thousand Men (born four hundred Leagues from one another, and who have no personal Quarrel) fall foul of each other as Madmen, and to be animated in all their Actions, not by their own Hatred, but by that of the Prince, which is the Rule of their's, both as to Duration and Termination.

I CAN easily conceive how, in just Wars, the Subjects enter chearfully into their King's Interests; and I am no less sensible why Republicans so zealously defend their Country, on the Preservation whereof depend their Rights and Liberties; but in arbitrary Government, Patriotism is not the Case,  
for

for the People, under a Tyrant and Contemner of the Laws, are not Subjects, but Slaves; and it is scarce to be imagined that an Army of such dispirited Soldiers will attempt any thing that's grand or distinguishing; and yet there are many Instances, even in despotick States, of the People's being animated by Self-Interest, Emulation for Glory, and the Service of the Prince, as much as by the Love of their Country, and which have produced the same Effects.

THE common People never penetrate into what may be the true Interest of their Country, those in the Administration ought to let them know it. In a monarchial Government a good King, who is the Father of his Subjects, should advise with Persons of the greatest Experience; and in a Common-Wealth, those who are at the Head of Affairs cannot be over cautious in guarding against mistaken Notions.

THE Art of Government is the most intricate of all Sciences; to violate the Laws is a Crime, and to observe them always with the same Exactness may be so too; thus the Happiness of the People depends on their being adapted to Times and Circumstances: Prudence sometimes requires that we content to the Prescription of certain Customs which it would be dangerous to trace to their Original; since, by re-ascending to their Source, we should often bring back Vices that are abolished, and for which End those very Usages had been established. Nevertheless, we must not, to avoid such Inconveniencies, give into arbitrary Law, which would be attended with a Train of Mistortunes and Inconveniencies: Equity is not writ, in legible Characters, on the Heart of Man, nor can it be perceived but thro' the thick Veil of Passions.

STRICT

STRICT and sound Justice ought to be exempt from Prejudice and Passion, contain'd within due Bounds, and guarded against false and fantastical Notions. Betwixt the two Extremes of adhering too strictly to the Law, and of taking too great Latitudes, there is a just Medium, which is the precise Point where the Happiness of the People, and the Glory of their Governors join: From a due Knowledge of this, results the Tranquility and Welfare of a State.

FAREWEL, my dear *Isaac*, be content, and then thou'lt be happy.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXVIII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I ARRIVED about fifteen Days ago at *Genoa*, where I met with curious and beautiful Things, not much inferior to those of *Rome*. This City abounds with magnificent Palaces, noble Pieces of Architecture, Pictures, and Statues, done by the ablest Masters \*; and here I again find some of those Things which I have seen in the ancient Metropolis of the World: But what surprizes and strikes me most, is the Difference betwixt the Manners of the *Genoese* and the *Romans*, it being  
a Thing

\* The finest Pictures at *Genoa* are those of the famous *Soriman*, placed in one of the principal Halls of the Doge's Palace. The two magnificent Statues, which the renowned *Puget* carved, are in the Church, at the End of *Ponte-Carignano*, which is also full of beautiful Pictures: But the finest Church in the City is that of *Annunciation*.



a Thing very extraordinary to find People in the same Climate and Country of so different Characters.

THE *Romans* are naturally lazy, Enemies to Labour, and immersed in Indolence and Effeminacy: The *Genoese* are industrious, intent upon Trade, ready to undertake and undergo any Thing, if they see that the Advantage will recompence their Trouble: The *Campagna Romana* is an excellent Soil, and easy to cultivate, yet there's nothing to be found there but Briars and Weeds, which shelter Serpents, Vipers, and many other venomous Creatures: The Mountains in the Neighbourhood of *Genoa* are cover'd with Olives, Oranges, and Citrons, which Nature has been forced to produce by the Art of the Inhabitants, and their indefatigable Industry has metamorphos'd a Ridge of frightful Rocks into the finest Garden of *Europe*.

THE insupportable Pride and Arrogance of the *Romans* continually involve them in Quarrels with all the Sovereign Princes: The Court of *Rome*, still taken up with aggrandizing Views, lets no Opportunity slip of attaining her Aim. The *Genoese*, far from endeavouring to augment their State, only study to preserve what they have, and, without encroaching on the Rights of other Sovereigns, think only how to secure their own: This is the sole Aim of all their Politicks. It must be allowed that their Situation is very critical; *France* is a formidable Neighbour, much hated, tho' they must dissemble their Sentiments: Before the late Changes in *Italy*, they look'd upon the Emperor as a Support against *France*, and though they durst not openly espouse his Interest, it was easy to perceive how they stood affected: Since the Loss of the *Milanese* they are in a Manner  
Slaves

Slaves to *France* \*; and their Fate is not unlike that of the old infirm Lion; for there's scarce a Prince in *Italy* who has not insulted them, and made Demands which would not have been mention'd at any other Time †. And, as an Addition to their Misfortunes, the Island of *Corfica*, which belongs to them, has revolted a-new, and has given them much Disturbance, without being able to gain any Ground. If the *Genoese* had been as politick in Domestick Affairs, as they are in the Concerns which they have with Foreign Princes, *Corfica* had never taken Arms: These People, content with their Lot, instead of revolting, would have sacrificed their Lives and Fortunes for the Safety of the Republick; but the Oppressions of Governors put over them, and the insupportable Arrogance of the *Genoese* Nobility, have forced them to violent Measures.

THIS Part of my Letter conducs me insensibly to the Form of a Republican Government, the Dispute has long run whether it is preferable to Monarchy; they who are Sticklers for Liberty maintain that it's dangerous to be subject to the Caprice of one Man, and that 'tis hard to be subjected to the Will of a single Person, who is not accountable for his Actions: Absolute Power appears to them as an Infringement on the Laws of Nature and Nations, and they can't bear that a Man should pretend to any Title of governing, but what is given him by them. Those, on the contrary, who are for Monarchical Power exclaim against the Inconveniencies of being subjected to  
a hundred

\* This Letter was written before the Peace was concluded in 1736. † The King of *Sardinia* has improved the favourable Conjunctions, which the last War gave him, to obtain many Things of the *Genoese*, which he would never have got but by his Alliance with *France* and *Spain*. By the by let me here add, that I don't believe there are two People who hate one another more than the *Genoese* and *Piedmontese*.

a hundred different Persons: This, in their Opinion, is to have a hundred Kings in place of one; and to be born a Republican is to be the Subject of many Sovereigns. If Subjection be our Fate, why not to one Prince, rather than several? If I must be reduced to this Condition, it matters not whom I serve; besides, when a King is good, he makes the whole State happy, and his Virtue alone is sufficient to render a whole Kingdom fortunate: But in a free State, the Virtue of one Senator is counter-balanced by the Vice of another, and the Disinterestedness of one Place-Man by the Avarice of some Collegue; thus there's a perpetual Contrast between the chief Men of a Republick, extremely prejudicial to private Men.

THIS is the main Defect of the *Genoese* Government, the Nobility are the Blood-suckers and Tyrants of the meaner Sort of People: Under the vain Pretext of an imaginary Liberty, in a distant View, they strip them of their Riches, and share the Fruit of their Labours.

THE Republick of *Holland* is otherwise managed; its wise and moderate Government has set Limits between the Power of Magistrates, and the Privileges of private Men; the one have, by the Laws of the State, a necessary, but limited Power; and the others are obedient, without being Slaves: A Sort of Equality, which has been carefully preserved, is the Basis of this delightful Harmony; but as there is nothing absolutely perfect, Brutality is the Consequence of too great Liberty, yet even this is confined to the lowest Class.

WHEN we examine, without Prejudice, and Partiality for our native Country, the different Forms of Governments, we're at a Loss to determine the Preference. There is in all Countries a Mixture of Good and Bad, and which Side to take, is the Difficulty: Monarchy wisely conducted



is a happy and fortunate State; Common-Wealths, where the Government is prudently, and in a right Proportion shared between the Magistrates and the People (as that of the United Provinces) secures perpetual Liberty, and yet both are liable to terrible Vicissitudes. One *Nero* does more Harm than ten *Titus*'s can retrieve. *Henry IV.* could not repair the hundredth Part of the Damages done by his Predecessor *Henry III.* In Common-Wealths there happen Events equally prejudicial to the State: The Jealousies and Hatred of some private Men throw the People into surprising Calamities. *Sylla* and *Marius*, *Pompey* and *Cæsar*, *Augustus* and *Mark-Anthony*, sacrificed more Citizens, than a hundred Years Wars against the Enemies of the Republick: And the late Divisions among the *Swiss* has done Mischiefs which they'll feel for a long Time.

'Tis morally impossible to find a Form of Government which has not its Good and Evil: The least Worst is the best; and 'tis a Folly to determine whether the Monarchical or Republican Government be the best. As their Value and Merit depend on certain Circumstances, when these don't occur, the Preference may be given alternately to one and t'other, according to Occurrences.

WE may however confidently assert, that among Monarchical and Republican Governments, there are some less bad than others. 'Tis easy to perceive that *France* is not subject to the Troubles and Confusions of the *Ottoman* Empire: The Laws that have fixed the *French* Monarch's Power are the surest Guarantees of its Duration, and the Support of his Authority. On the contrary, the despotick Will of the Sultans often proves their Ruin: Were they less Masters of gratifying whatever Whims they may take, they would sit securer on the Throne.

T H E R E



THERE is still a greater Difference betwixt the *Dutch* and *Genoese* Governments, than there is between that of the *French* Court and *Ottoman* Porte. The People of *Genoa* have no more than the Shadow of Liberty, being, under a specious gilded Name, down-right Slaves to all the Senators\*. A Burgher pays the same Deference to a Member of the Privy, or of the Grand Council, as a *Parisian* does to *Louis XV.* The Nobles make them daily feel that they are the Masters of the State, and the only Persons intitled to Dignities and Employments.

A PRIVATE Man, whatever Merit he may have, is confined all his Life to the obscure Honours of some inferior Post; a rigorous Law excludes him for ever from Places of Consequence in the Republick, to which the Nobility only can aspire: Virtue, Courage, and Resolution, are better rewarded in a Monarchical State, and may conduct one to the highest Rank; and, tho' private Persons meet with more Obstacles in their Way than great Men, yet they're not excluded by the Laws.

THE *Dutch* Government has regulated the Rights of its Subjects with such Equality and Justice, that they are all encouraged to defend their Country, where they have Peace, Tranquility, and the Path to Honours, free and open, if they deserve them; so that whoever has Merit may attain to any thing. When an eminent Post is to be bestowed, no old musty Records are search'd into for the Titles of Ancestors, and no Regard is had to the Qualities of those who lived two hundred Years ago. Present and personal Virtue has its Reward, and whoever would be great in *Holland*, must be Virtuous; in a State so well governed, every Citizen is his Country's Child.

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\* And still more so to the Monks and Inquisitors.

In the Republick of *Genoa*, the common People look upon themselves as Foundlings, ignorant of their Mothers, and consequently the Government finds but cold Returns from their Affections: The most absolute Sovereigns are much dearer to their Subjects, than the Heads of this Republick are to their Fellow-Citizens. If under despotick Power there's no Patriotism, Self-interest, and the Desire of attaining to Honours to gratify one's Ambition (Hopes to which the *Genoese* must not pretend) supply the Want of Love to one's Country, and the Desire of supporting its Liberty and Privileges: But the Post is going, and I must end my Letter.

TAKE Care of thy Health, and may Heaven protect thee against thy Enemies, and make thee prosperous in Trade.

*Genoa*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXIX.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I HAVE acquainted thee of several Methods which the Monks have invented to strip the People of their Money, but as yet I have said nothing of the principal Branch of their Revenues: They make the *Nazarenes* believe, that there's a Place where the Souls, after Death, go to do Pennance for some venial Sins, which deserve not the Wrath of God \*. They have appropriated to themselves the sole Right of releasing those who

\* Purgatory.

who are condemn'd to this Place of Expiation; and, for a certain Sum of Money, limit the Extent of divine Justice: Their Favour is so great with the Sovereign Being, that one would think they had farm'd the Privilege of admitting whom they pleased to the Beatifical Vision.

SOME of the *Nazarenes* have refused to submit to this Doctrine; and maintain that at Death God determines our Fate; which has so provok'd the Monks, that they have declared them separated from their Communion; and would have much rather put up with their denying a Hell (a Place indeed of no Profit to the Priests) than that they should inveigh against their useful Purgatory: When a Man is damned, Prayers, Candles, and Charities, cannot alter his Fate; but, when he's in Purgatory, if his Heirs are in good Circumstances, they must pay heartily for his Release; Loads of Wax-Candles, Money to build a Chappel for some old or new Saint, and Prayers sung in full Choirs, &c.

WHEN a Soul, condemned to the expiatory Flames, proves a good Milk-Cow, the Monks are not rash to deliver it, and thereby lose so good a Perquisite; they only ease it a little, by modifying the Fire, and ordering the tartarian Smiths to blow the Coals more or less, as the Money comes in. It often happens that the Monks permit some of those Souls, for whose Deliverance the Parents forget the necessary Contributions, to make a Trip into the World to solicit some of their Friends to bestow a small Matter for their Delivery out of that disagreeable Place: They usually make their Appearance in Flame-colour'd Robes, to denote their suffering State: Whereas the Souls of the Damned, when they appear, are cloathed in black and dismal Weeds: The Souls of the Blessed appear in Linnen Robes, white as



Snow. If a Man is but the least acquainted with the Books of *Nazarene* Miracles \*, he cannot miss to know the different Dresses of all the Souls, and, by the Tone of the Voice, to know their State in the other World †.

WHAT I say of the *Nazarene* Credulity will appear so strange, that thou'lt perhaps imagine I over-stretch Things; but, I assure thee, that the Picture is done to the Life, and according to Truth; and, if thou consider'st that none but the meanest Sort give into these Chimeras, thou'lt the more easily believe what I tell thee: Men, to whom Reflection, Study, or even common Sense, lay open the Ridiculousness of these Frauds, think it none of their Business to undeceive the silly Simpletons, and thereby draw a Crowd of Enemies upon their Backs, and therefore only regret in Secret the Errors of the deluded People. If there's no Religion in the World in which the People are so superstitious as in the *Nazarene*, so neither is there any where People of a certain Rank give less Credit to the Fables of Monks.

THE Preachers at *Paris* are constantly thundering against the Neglect of *Nazarene* Precepts, and prophesy extraordinary and sudden Changes in Religion, without more Docility, and a stronger Belief of what is told them; yet their Discourses add but little to their Credit, Reason, enlightening the Mind, lays open their Impostures.

IN the tenth Century, the Monks took it into their Heads to preach the End of the World, and persuaded the People that, as the Earth was to be soon reduced to nothing, they had no further Occasion for any Thing in it; so that all ran with their Effects to the Clergy, who, by that Stratagem, became the universal Heirs of all *Europe*; and,

\* See the Institution of *All-Souls Day*. † See the Book intitled, *Penses-y-bien, The Life of St. Bruno, &c.*



and, in less than thirty or forty Years, possessed in *France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, &c.* a large Half of the Revenues of those Kingdoms: At last, Peoples Eyes were opened, and in the Ages succeeding to this of Ignorance, the Veil dropp'd, and Truth appear'd.

ABOUT two hundred Years ago, two illustrious Men \* reliev'd good Sense from Slavery; supported by Reason, they struggled against the Torrent of Ignorance, restored Sciences, and paved the Way for that Crowd of great Men who followed. The Wars and Disorders which ensued upon their Opinions, made them be look'd upon as Disturbers of the publick Peace: But, besides that this odious Title cannot justly be ascribed but to their Persecutors, ought we to regret Troubles that lead to a solid Calm, that restore a Man to the Use of Reason, and rescue him from the Ignorance in which he wallowed?

THOSE of the *Nazarenes*, who are Enemies to the Sentiments of *Luther* and *Calvin*, do them the Justice to own, that they have disengaged Reason from its Prejudices, and that they are the Restorers of the banish'd Sciences; they only condemn them for having pushed their Opinion, with Respect to certain Articles of the *Nazarene* Faith, too far; and of having rendered Religion too plain and simple, by remounting to the first Institution. They pretend that Rites and Ceremonies are authorised by Possession and Custom, and that 'tis dangerous to trace them to their Source. Laws and Precepts are, in their Opinion, like Rivers that swell and grow famous as they run along: Those who have no other Rule but the Institution of a Custom, which has been in Force for several Ages, and who are always for going back to the Source, are apt to be led astray.

IN

\* *Luther* and *Calvin*.

IN Matters where Religion has no Concern, these Opinions seem to be well founded, but not so where the Case is Faith and Belief, for the more simple and plain they are, the more valuable: How happy had it been for us if two of our Doctors had done in *Judaism*, what those have done *Nazarenism*? we should have been delivered from a Yolk of Ceremonies, which appear to me daily more and more uselefs.

I'LL freely own that the more I give myself up to Study and Philosophy, the less I am satisfied with the Visions of our Rabbies: I have already given thee my Thoughts on this Head. It were to be wish'd, for the Good of *Israel*, that they were all as discreet and prudent as thee; we should not be reproached with those Opinions, which, tho' they contain nothing prejudicial to the Fundamentals of our Religion, nor any ways appertain to it, yet do us considerable Harm, in the Opinion of those who search not to the Bottom of Things. When we would judge of a Religion, we must have no Regard to the Superfices, or out Side, but go directly to the Foundation, or Basis, and from them form a Judgment: But what can be said to a Heap of Maxims and Customs of no Signification, and which are to Religion, what Dress is to a Man, and only serve to hide the Faults or Beauties of a Law.

LET me suppose, for a Minute, that a *Chinese* Philosopher, a Disciple of *Confucius*, who has no Notion of *Europe*, should be brought into it, and desired to give his Opinion of the Beauty of *Judaism*, of which a *Nazarene* gives him a Picture true, but drawn so as to ridicule it. "The Law," says he to him, of the *Israelites*, consists in cutting no Bread, but with their own Knife; rather to starve than to eat of certain Meats; in singing with certain Contorsions and Grimaces;

" in

“ in being the Butchers themselves of what they  
 “ kill ; in not tasting the Juice of the Grape pressed  
 “ by those of another Religion ; and in believing  
 “ that they may lawfully deceive all that are not  
 “ of their Communion, &c.” What could this  
*Chinese* Philosopher think, on hearing such a ridiculous Account of it ? But if an *Israelite*, stripping Religion of the exterior and useless Ornaments, should shew it in its native Dress, and tell him, that he believes one God, a Spirit immense, eternal, and omnipotent, who made all Things out of nothing, who sustains every Thing by his Will, who punishes the Bad, and rewards the Good ; the Philosopher, charm’d with these Ideas, and astonish’d with Truth, striking on his Heart, confesses that the *Jew* believes and follows what the most refined Reason clearly demonstrates : If, in the rest of the *Jewish* Law, he perceives Errors, he blames the Men that introduced them, and distinguishes the Essential from the Superficial.

THE *Nazarene* Religion, as it is represented by the First-rate Doctors, throws a stronger Brilliant than ours ; they have all our first Principles, but seem to have refin’d upon the Consequences : Our Morality has something severe and savage ; their’s seems to be dictated by the Divine Word : Honesty, Candour, the Pardoning of Enemies, and all the Virtues, which the Heart and Mind can embrace, are strictly commanded ; nothing can dispense them from their Duty, so that a true *Nazarene* is a perfect Philosopher. In other Religions, Men seem to serve God from the sordid Principle of Interest ; and the *Nazarenes* alone have the Affection of Children for so good a Father : They serve him for himself, and not from the Motive of Reward ; whereas we *Jews* pray for Riches, Plenty, and good Things of this World : We have been in all Times but too little concerned about  
 the



the other. When *Jerusalem* was in its Glory, we had several in our Communion who thought the Soul was mortal \*. If they ask'd Favours they did not mean after Death, they had no Occasion for them then; and when Life was attended with too many Misfortunes, they prevented God's continuing them, by putting violent Hands on themselves. Consider only how ridiculous it is to admit of a God, and to limit his Power.

FAREWEL, my dear *Isaac*; 'tis long since I heard from thee.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*

\* The Sadducees.



## LETTER XXX.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

THE Death of the Bashaw *Osman* \*, of which thou art so curious to know the Particulars, was a Piece of false News, published at *Constantinople*: He is still in *Bosnia*; and a dangerous Distemper, which brought him to the Brink of the Grave, gave Occasion to the Report of his Death: His Health is not perfectly recovered, and his Friends are still in Fears of a dangerous Relapse.

THE Constancy with which *Osman* look'd Death in the Face, hath acquired him the Esteem of those who are pleased with Heroism in such Cases. When the Physicians had lost all Hopes of preserving his Life, he himself, finding that he was in a State from which he could have no Prospect of Recovery,

\* Count Bonnevale.



Recovery, divided such Effects as were at his Disposal, among those who served him; and dictated a Letter to the Grand Vizir, giving him an Account of the State in which he left the Province committed to his Care: He also wrote to the Countess *Bonneval*, his former Spouse, and to one of his Friends, with whom he had always corresponded by Letters ever since he was in *Turky*; and thereafter talk'd familiarly to his Secretary on the principal Events of his Life. "My Memory," said he, "will be an Instance of the most finish'd Misfortune, and the firmest Constancy: All the Crosses and Disappointments I have undergone, have not been able to divert my Thoughts from Revenge against Enemies; and, if I have not been so happy as to see my Designs succeed, the Confusion they have been put into, from the Evils which they dreaded from me, is some Sort of Satisfaction for not really being able to crush them."

DURING the Bashaw's Distemper several Events happen'd, which discovered the Firmness of his Mind, under the Weight that depress'd him. A *Nazarene* Priest, imagining that the Prejudices of Youth would have an Influence on the Bashaw, in his last Moments, put on a *Turkish* Habit, and desired to speak with him about Matters of Importance. *Osman*, during the Course of his Malady never desisted from doing Business (his Case being rather a sinking of Spirits, and languishing, than acute Pains) he therefore ordered that the pretended *Turk*, who had Secrets of Consequence to reveal, should be admitted.

THE Priest soon after his Reception confessed his Disguise, and begg'd of *Osman* that he would remember he was born a *Nazarene*, and that he would be undone for ever, without returning to the Law which he had abandoned: He then made a  
long

long and pathetic Discourse, to which the Bashaw listened very attentively.

WHEN the Priest had ended his long-studied Harrangue, "I'll now, said *Osman*, give you as  
 " wholesome Advice, as what you have plenti-  
 " fully bestowed upon me: Take Care, for the  
 " future, not to risk such dangerous Steps as this  
 " is; the *Turks* don't understand jesting with Re-  
 " ligion; and if they knew that you were attempt-  
 " ing to seduce a Profelyte, you would not easily  
 " get out of the Scrape: All the *Musselmén* do  
 " not look upon the Interests of *Mahomet* with  
 " the same Coolness that I do; therefore take my  
 " Advice, and risk no more being impaled."

THE Priest was preparing to renew the Attack, but *Osman* told him, "There's enough for this  
 " Time, the Audience you desir'd has been abun-  
 " dantly long." "Must I then be so unlucky,  
 " replied the Priest, as to have gain'd nothing upon  
 " your Soul." "No, said the Bashaw, but you  
 " have converted my Purse, which, I suppose, is  
 " as dear to you as the other." And then he or-  
 " dered his Secretary, who was the only Witness  
 " of this Conference, to give the *Nazarene* a hun-  
 " dred Pieces, and dismiss him.

I HAVE been told another Passage about *Os-  
 man*, which struck me, and which proves the Free-  
 dom of Mind he preserved during his Sickness:  
 His Iman, who idolized Money, and who passed  
 for a Rogue, fatigued him often with the Rehear-  
 sal of *Mahomet's* rare Qualities, and of the Hap-  
 piness that he was going to taste with the Pro-  
 phet's Favourites. "Heark-ye, said the Bashaw,  
 " dost thou think, after Death, to be in the Num-  
 " ber of his Favourites?" "Without Doubt, re-  
 " plied the Iman, for having had the Happiness  
 " to serve the Prophet in this World, to be sure  
 " I shall have a distinguished Place in the other."

"So

“ So much the worse, said the Bashaw, for if such  
 “ Rogues, as thou art, go thither, I should think  
 “ myself in very bad Company, and would rather  
 “ chuse to go with the *Nazarenes*, whom thou  
 “ damnest, because among them there are a great  
 “ many honest People.”

THEY tell twenty other Stories of *Osman*, which I shall not mention. The Philosophers here admire him more than the Ancients did *Seneca*: They pretend that the Pagan Philosopher, in his last Discourse, expressed too great a Concern for the Loss of Life; whereas the other expected Death with a manly Assurance, neither dreading, nor wishing for it: Thus *Petronius* contemplated the Horrors of his Fate, and supported his Character even in his last Words and Sentiments, by shewing a Joy and Serenity of Mind in the Midst of the Bath, blushing with the Blood that streamed from his Veins. In my Opinion, *Petronius* died as a Philosopher, and *Seneca* as a Man condemned to Execution.

WE daily see People, brought upon a Scaffold for Execution, harranguing the Spectators with tedious Kyrielles of moral Sentences, a Thing very common in *England*, where few are hang'd without pronouncing Dying Speeches; but where do we find Men capable, in their last Moments, to vanquish Prejudices, and, like *Osman*, to preserve that noble Composure of Mind?

I FRANKLY own, my dear *Monceca*, that, as much Philosopher as I am, I should be loath to die out of the Pale of *Judaism*; the first Notions conceived in Infancy, and cultivated ever after, are irresistible. I have Ground to believe that *Osman* is dubious about the *Nazarene* Religion, he was suspected as such while he professed that Law; 'tis highly probable, if not certain, that he's less affected with *Mahometism*; however, in this State

of Uncertainty, if so be that he thinks there is such a Thing as Religion, 'tis likely his Heart, by the Influence of first Impressions, will incline towards the Christian Scheme. Some Persons, with whom he was intimate, pretend that his Byass is towards our Side; if this be true, it accounts for his Serenity of Mind: The Letters he wrote to his Lady and to his Friend, and of which Copies are handed about at *Constantinople*, seem to confirm this Opinion: For thy Satisfaction I send thee Extracts of them.

*Letter from Count BONNEVAL to his Lady.*

“ PERMIT me, Madam, to employ the last  
 “ Moments of Life in expressing the Concern I’m  
 “ under for that which my Change of Religion  
 “ must have given you: People of Rank and Dis-  
 “ tinction will attribute it to a resolute Temper,  
 “ but the ignorant Vulgar cannot see through the  
 “ Veil of Mysteries; so that you must suffer for  
 “ the Crime that I have committed. Revenge  
 “ made me *Turk*, and, as such, the same Passion  
 “ will lead me to my Grave. I wait my Doom  
 “ with the same Tranquility in *Asia*, and dread it  
 “ no more than if I were in the Midst of *Paris*:  
 “ We pity your Fate, and you lament ours; and  
 “ both of us think we’re in the Right; but while  
 “ the doubtful Case is undecided, I hope Heaven  
 “ will make us both happy, you in this World,  
 “ and me in the next.”

*Letter from Count BONNEVAL to the Duke  
 of \*\*\*\*\*.*

“ I AM now booted and spurr’d, my dear Duke,  
 “ for a long Journey; and, after I am gone, my  
 “ Heirs will have no Presents to make to Hospi-  
 “ tals, nor Demands from Curates, Friars, and  
 “ Church-Wardens, to satisfy: My Iman will  
 “ conduct



“conduct me into the Vault without any Forma-  
 “lity, and assure all *Asia*, that I am with *Mahomet*  
 “in the Mansion of the Blessed; his Funeral-  
 “Oration will be a pompous Description of my  
 “Celestial Seraglio of Virgin-Wives, which the  
 “good Angels have prepared for me, and with  
 “whom I shall pass an Eternity in exquisite Rap-  
 “tures; whilst in *France*, and *Germany*, the Monks  
 “will cry themselves hoarse with my Apostacy:  
 “One will count the Number of Lashes with  
 “which *Astaroth* regaled me at my Reception into  
 “Hell; another will reckon up the Fire-brands  
 “which *Belzebub* has kindled to broil me, and  
 “the Cauldrons of boiling Oil in which I have  
 “been sours’d: A strange Effect this of human  
 “Caprice, that after Death I shall be happy on  
 “this Side the *Danube*, and unhappy on the other!  
 “You, my dear Duke (to whom my Fate is no  
 “Surprize, and who, sensible of the immense  
 “Power of God, acknowledges his Goodness)  
 “preserve the Memory of a Friend, who, not-  
 “withstanding his Misfortunes, deserves your E-  
 “steem, and even the Admiration of his Ene-  
 “mies.”

A JEW, my dear *Monceca*, a true *Israelite*,  
 would on a Death-Bed write no otherwise: Tho’  
 the Bashaw does not declare himself openly, ’tis  
 easy to read into his Sentiments; and, supposing  
 him really to be such, his not making an authen-  
 tick Profession, is an unpardonable Weakness,  
 since our purified Law expressly forbids all such  
 Disguise: If the Bashaw be a *Jew*, he must be of  
 the Sect at *Paris*\*, mentioned in thy fourth Let-  
 ter, who make no Use of Circumcision, nor so  
 much as know that they are of the *Jewish* Faith:  
 The Bashaw, as those of *Paris*, performs no ex-  
 ternal Worship, and observes no Ceremonies.

T 2

NEVER-

\* The Deists.

NEVERTHELESS, my dear *Monceca*, we must necessarily believe that, since God has created Man to serve him, he has prescrib'd Rules of Worship. What Confusions would arise from every Person's having a different Way of Thinking about the Worship due to the Deity? The Mind of Man, apt to err, would soon relapse into Idolatry; and we should see him, with the Censer in his Hand, doing Homage to the vilest Animals, deifying Flowers, and cultivating thousands of Gods in his Kitchen-Garden.

SINCE writing what's above, I'm assured that the Bashaw is perfectly recovered. Take care of thy Health, my dear *Monceca*, and may thy Prosperity still increase.

*Constantinople, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER XXXI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I COMMUNICATED thy Letter concerning *Osman* Bashaw's Sickness to some of my learned Friends, and they all agree that 'tis the very Picture of the Man: Some blam'd his furious Zeal to destroy that Religion in which he was born, and maintain'd that this Conduct has quite ruin'd his Reputation: Others were of a different Opinion, alledging, that tho' a Change of Religion from political Views may be unpardonable in the Sight of God, it no ways affects the Gentleman. The Dispute went high on both Sides, and ended (as it most commonly happens in such Cases) in every one's adhering to his own Opinion:

nion: As for my Part, I think it's no very difficult Matter to decide the Question. The Belief of a Deity is necessary to the Man of Honour; and this Deity having establish'd a Worship to be paid, it follows, by a natural Consequence, that who believes must practise what is commanded, and that no Change is allowable but for the better.

THE World condemns Dissimulation as a Crime; and is not the feign'd Belief of a Thing, which we inwardly laugh at, a continual Dissimulation? I should less blame an Atheist (if any such there be) than one who believes a Deity, and who honours him in a Way that he knows to be disagreeable: The one offends against Light and Conviction, and the other, by his unhappy Blindness and Ignorance. A King of *France* would no doubt be less offended at an ignorant *Ethiopian*, who should deny that there ever was such a Person, than at a *Spaniard*, who should hold such insolent Discourse. Besides, I am positive that there is no Atheist truly convinc'd of his Opinion, nor can I believe that even those who pass'd in the World for the Champions of Atheism thought what they said: The more Genius they had, the more Arguments they found to prove their System; and consequently the more they must discover the Falshood in their own refin'd Ideas; which Matter, stretch'd to the highest Point that it's capable of, could never produce.

Is there any Thing so ridiculous, so absurd, as to imagine that Confusion and Disorder could produce the Regularity of the Universe? that a Mass of jostling Atoms could form Matter capable of foreseeing Futurity, of discerning the Courses and Revolutions of the celestial Bodies, of measuring the vast Expanse of the Heavens, of communicating its Thoughts, Sentiments, and all its internal Motions to another thinking Matter

of the same Make? Is it possible that a Man can seriously reflect on a Subject that speaks so plainly the Divinity, and be really persuaded that there's no such Being? No, my dear *Isaac*, I can't believe it! however fond an *Epicurean* may be of his fortuitous Course of Atoms, yet, when he's in his deepest Meditations, Truth holds her Torch before his Eyes, and, tho' he shut them, unwilling to be enlighten'd, the Glare must raise his Doubts.

WERE I, this Moment that I am writing to thee, an *Epicurean*, I should be strangely difficulted to conceive how a thousand Millions of Particles, or Atoms, jumbled together by Chance, had produced this Letter. "What! should I say, a second Principle drawn from a first! a Justness in Reasoning, clear and distinct Ideas, are they form'd by Caprice, supported by Caprice, and continued by Caprice? Is the most perfect Regularity, and the Continuation of that Regularity only owing to Confusion and Chance\*?" That which has evidenc'd such infinite Wisdom  
" and

\* *Nam simul ac Ratio tua cepit vociferari  
Naturam Rerum haud divina Mente co-ortam:  
Diffugiunt Animi Terrores, Mania Mundi  
Discedunt, totum video per Inane geri Res.*

-----, *Nusquam apparent Acherusia Templa.*

Lucret. de Rerum. Natur. Libr. III. Vers. 14. &c.

Thus Paraphrased:

When once thy Reason took the Task to prove,  
That Nature ow'd no Frame to Powers above;  
My Mind was calm, my Terrors all withdrew,  
And *Acherusia*\* lessen'd in my View.

\* A River taken for the Entrance of Hell.

When Knowledge and Penetration, says *Lucretius*, speaking of *Epicurus*, had laid open the Secrets of Nature, every Thing called out, if I may so say, that the World was not the Work of a Divine Spirit. Our Terrors then evanished, the Limits of the World were remov'd, and we perceived that Hell and *Acheron* were but Fables.



“ and Foresight in forming and preserving the  
“ World, must it not be something divine that  
“ deserves the highest Honours and Sacrifices?”

IF I believed the *Epicurean* System, when I behold the Sun on our Horizon bending his rapid Course towards the Antipodes, such would be my Exclamation; “ Hail, eternal Chance! incomprehensible Irregularity! admirable Confusion! “ which maintains Order and Regularity; which “ preserves and perpetuates that divine and surprising Harmony, seen and felt in all the Parts “ of the Universe; permit me to render thee the “ Honours that other blind Mortals pay to an “ all-powerful, infinitely wise and good God.”

BELIEVE’ST thou, my dear *Isaac*, that there are *Epicureans* who, having consider’d Nature, must not be forced, in spite of Prejudice, to own a first Cause, which preserves and maintains that Order and Regularity so conspicuous in the Universe? Whatever may be their Obstinacy, sure I am, they can’t be persuaded that human Understanding either flows from, or is supported by a blind and undiscerning Cause.

THEY who deny the Being of a God may be ranged into two different Classes; the first is composed of Philosophers, lost in Reasoning and Argument, wearied with fruitless Search into the immense Capacity of the Divine Nature, and shock’d with certain Difficulties to which no Solution could be fram’d; they vainly imagin’d that not being able to fathom the Depth of God’s Immensity, they were intitled to deny his Existence, as if our Ignorance of the Operations of a Being was a Reason to reject it. We see daily Effects and Productions of Nature, of which the Causes are hid from us; tho’ we are ignorant how from one single Grain springs a loaded Ear of Corn; shall we therefore deny that it is actually so? The Operations

rations of the Power of God are as visible as the sprouting Grain. We cannot, I own, attain to an exact Knowledge of his Grandeur, Power, and Essence; but do we understand the Secret of Germination?

THE second Class of Atheists is the most numerous, and is composed of Free-thinkers and Rakes, whose Debaucheries, instead of Study and Meditation, regulate their Faith: Yet, even of these, few there be who, in the midst of their Career, feel not the attractive Power of Truth; and, to avoid Remorse, must blind-fold their Eyes; for the Moment they're at Liberty, they every where behold the Glory of the Almighty: Turn they them towards the Heavens, 'tis there they must contemplate his Grandeur: Fix they them on the Earth, here they see his Wisdom and Power: As they can't, with sophistical Arguments (that vain Resource of Philosophers) stifle Reason, constant Doubts torment them; Fear, Remorse, and Perturbations of Mind, are gnawing Vultures, that avenge on their Hearts the Affront put upon the Deity.

AMONG the common People, few are fully'd with Atheism, it being more properly a Quality, than a Burgher Crime. The greatest Princes of the World have been the greatest Enemies of the Divinity; and their Blindness was owing to their Grandeur and Power. *Ninus*, the *Assyrian* King, made his Boasts, that he had never seen the Stars, nor desired to see them; and that he despised the Sun, Moon, and all the other Deities. *Sardanapalus*, one of *Ninus*'s Successors, chusing to put himself to Death, rather than fall into his Enemies Hands, caused this Inscription to be put upon his Monument:

“ SARDANAPALUS lived many Years in a  
 “ little Time, having indulged himself in every  
 “ Pleasure:

“Pleasure: He built two Cities, *Anchiale* and  
 “*Tarse*, in one Day, and in twenty-four Hours,  
 “did a Work of many Years. Reader, follow  
 “his Example, eat, drink, and be merry, for af-  
 “ter Death there’s neither Pain nor Pleasure.”

NINUS and *Sardanapalus* were quite indolent Atheists, who, tho’ they denied, did not despise the Deity: But there have been others who have push’d their Madness farther: *Diagoras*, the Sophist, burnt a *Jupiter* of Wood, to make his Pot boil, saying, as it burnt, Courage, *Hercules*, after thy twelve laborious Exploits, for the Service of *Euristheus*, it’s but reasonable the thirteenth should be for me. A certain *Dennis*, King of *Sicily*, stript the Statue of *Jupiter Olympius* of its golden Robe, and cloath’d it in Woollen; and, to excuse this Sacrilege, said, that fair Exchange was no Robbery; and that, for the God’s Health, it was necessary he should have a Summer and Winter-Dress. The same *Dennis* acted the Barber upon the Statue of *Æsculapius*, and cut off his golden Beard; alledging, for Reason, that as *Apollo*, his Father, was beardless, it was fit the Son should be so too. This Story puts me in mind of another, which happened in our Time, and which I have from the *Chevalier de Maisin*. There’s an illustrious Family in *France*, of the Name of *Levi*, who pretend to be lineally descended from the Tribe of *Israel*, which bore that Name; the *Marquis de Levi*, Captain of a Man of War, arrived, in the late Wars, at a little Town in *Spain*, which favoured the Enemy; he landed some Soldiers, and laid the Town under Contribution, and was preparing to re-embark, when a Soldier told him, that he had seen a Silver Image in a Church four or five Feet high; the Marquis was tempted to lay hold of this valuable Image, and accordingly went to the Church, desired to see the Statue, and ask’d  
 whom

whom it represented? The Answer was, *St. Magdalen*, a *Jewess* by Birth, in the Infancy of Christianity. "Gentlemen, said the Marquis to the Priests, I am delighted to hear News of my Cousin; I am of *Jewish* Race, and very near a-kin to this Female-Saint, therefore I hope you won't take it amiss that she goes with me to *France*, where I design to build a Temple worthy of her:" With that he seized his dear Cousin, and sent her aboard; but on his Arrival, the Court, who had been inform'd of the Story, ordered him to send her back at his own Cost and Charge, and without powerful Friends he certainly had been broke.

THO' the Action of this *French* Officer was no Offence against God, yet it was very criminal in him, since, by violating the Respect due to Saints, he fail'd in an essential Point of his Religion. They who are born in a particular Religion, and who, believing it to be true, violate certain Principles, and make a Mockery of their Faith, are driving hard to that unhappy Stupidity which leads to Atheism: A Man has no Right to condemn a Principle, and to act in consequence, but so far as he thinks it false.

FAREWELL, my dear *Isaac*, and may thou prosper in all thy Undertakings.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXXII.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I WENT, two Days ago, to visit a *Venetian Jew*, lately arrived in this City, where his Reputation is already very much up; he sells Phosphorus's



phorus's and Essences, distill'd for different Causes, some for whitening, and others for smoothing the Skin; he has fundry curious Machines for Philosophical Experiments, but what draws Crowds of People to his House, and excites their Curiosity most, is that all *Paris* believes him to be thoroughly versed in the Cabalistical Science. Curiosity and Anxiety to know the Truth of a Thing which I never could believe, tempted me to make Acquaintance with him: I asked him, if he could foresee Things to come, and if he had the Power of commanding Spirits? He frankly owned, that all his Knowledge consisted in Chymical Experiments.

"I have, said he, ever since I was born, heard  
 "Talk of Cabalists, and whatever Search I have  
 "made, I never could find out any: I have con-  
 "versed with several Persons who had the Repu-  
 "tation of excelling in that Science, but they all  
 "confessed that their Knowledge, like mine, ex-  
 "tended no farther than some Chymical Compo-  
 "sitions, whose Effects were known but to few;  
 "however, as they found their Account in the  
 "Notion that the Publick entertained, they did  
 "not think it was their Business to undeceive  
 "them."

I HAVE been, my dear *Brito*, at as much Pains to inform myself about the Cabalists as the *Venetian Jew*, and have found as little Truth in all the Stories reported of them as he. Sound Philosophy had already convinc'd me that the disclosing of future Events belong'd to God alone; and I was under no Uncertainty, but with Respect to the pretended Power assign'd to the Cabalists over certain *Genii*, always at their Command.

I HAVE examin'd upon what Grounds they assumed this Power over Spirits, and found their Arguments so mean and trifling, that I have placed their Art in the Rank of judicial Astrology. Can  
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Folly go a greater Length than to imagine that, by the ranging of certain Letters, and Pronunciation of certain Words, 'tis possible to put a new Face on human Things, and to stop their Course? thereby assuming to themselves a Power equal to that of the Author of Nature.

IN all Religions we meet with many who think that corresponding with Spirits adds much to their Reputation; and several assume a Power of banishing them from the Places of their Residence. The *Nazarenes* are fully persuaded of the Power of the *Genii*; and the Priests of that Religion pretend to an absolute Authority over the *Dæmons*: They positively assert, that they know them all by Name and Sur-name, and when, or upon what Occasion, they have a Right to take Possession of a House, or of the Body of some private Person. The Vulgar and the Simple give into all these Extravagancies; and some of them, by frequently hearing of People possess'd, fancy themselves to be so too; and are thus affected with a Folly, of which they have still the Picture before them by the Stories constantly buzzed about their Ears.

ALL the *Nazarene* Books of Religion seem to be the Continuation of *Amadis des Gaules* \*, wherein we see nothing but Conjurers, Sorcerers, Devils, and devilish Tricks. One of their own Pontives † tells us, that he thought the Lives of the Saints were not written with so much Dignity as that of the Pagan Philosophers by *Diogenes Laertius*: In effect, what can a Man of Sense say, when he reads the foolish Pranks of a Devil to seduce a Hermit living in a Desert ‡? What can he think when he reads in another Place of a Monk's burning, for his Diversion, the Devil's Claws with a Candle §? And how ridiculous must a great many other

\* A French Romance. † Cardinal Bessarion. ‡ The Temptation of St. Anthony. § The Life of St. Dominic.



other Books appear, in which we see all the Follies and Extravagancies that the most distracted Imagination can produce \*.

THESE pernicious Fables are approved of by the *Nazarene* Priests, and most of them of their own Invention: The Reputation of sending those pretended Dæmons a-packing, flatters their Vanity: The Ceremony of Conjurati<sup>o</sup>n consists in the Composition of a certain Water, incorporated with Salt †, in a sanctified Vessel, over which several odd Grimaces and Gesticulations being duly performed, different Tunes sung, and several Words pronounced, the Virtue of the Charm is completed. This holy Water is carefully preserved, and well ought it so to be, since a single Drop will make a Legion of Devils take to their Heels.

WHEN Men are under the Delusion of being possess'd, the same Prejudice that makes them imagine the Devil has got into their Bodies, persuades them that the Remedy will force him out; so that the Priests cure one Lie with another; when once the Imagination is rectified, the Distemper ceases; and thus such Wretches, the constant Bubbles of Prejudice, are miserable or happy, according to its different Turns. However astonishing that Blindness of the People, in being so easily impress'd with such Chimæras, will appear to some, yet when we consider that these Errors have the Sanction of Church Precepts, our Surprise will be the less: The *Nazarene* Temples are full of Monuments, which transmit, from Age to Age, the Histories of these Sorceries.

IN a Town not far from *Paris* ‡, there's a miraculous Candle, call'd *The everlasting Taper*, shewn upon a certain Day to the People, and which, they pretend, burns constantly, without

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wasting;

\* *Exorcism of the Nuns of Louviers, The History of Magdalen de la Palu, &c.* † Holy Water. ‡ *Amiens.*

wasting; they have inclosed it in a long Tube, like a Candlestick, about an Inch of it rising above the Muzzle, and so contriv'd, that when this Part is burnt, it can be rais'd, without observing how, to the same Height; and when it's wholly wasted, another clapp'd into the Tube with the same Dexterity: However gross this Mummery is, it would be dangerous to dispute the Miracle with People who are persuaded of the Truth, for such there are who would bear a Joke on any Thing but the holy Candle.

THIS Fable is founded on the pretended Deliverance of a *Nazarene*, who had sold himself to the Devil. This Man, named *Christopher*, tired with sore Labour, and no Money, resolved to better his State in this World, tho' he should be a little worse in the next. He heard his Pastor often speaking of the Devil's great Power, and how largely he rewarded those who gave themselves to him: This was enough to persuade the lazy *Christopher* to try if he could make a Bargain with *Old Nick*, and so live easy without working; and accordingly he called upon him several times; but whether it was that he had other Business upon Hand, or that he foresaw what was to happen, he made no great Haste to obey *Christopher's* Call, till quite tired with the Importunities of the covetous *Nazarene*, he at last came to his House, and appeared to him in the Shape of a pretty little Monkey. "What would'st thou with me, said  
 " he, thou hast been long calling? speak, in what  
 " can I serve thee? My Lord, answer'd *Christo-*  
 " *pher*, I am told that your Lordship bestows  
 " Riches and Wealth at Pleasure; and should be  
 " very much obliged to you for a small Share of  
 " your Favours. But what wilt thou give me?  
 " said the Devil. Alas! my Lord, replied *Chri-*  
 " *stopher*, I'm but a poor Carpenter, that lives by  
 " my

“ my Calling, and have nothing. I'll give thee,  
 “ said *Belzebub*, for thirty Years, as much Gold  
 “ as thou desirest; but after that I shall have Oc-  
 “ casion for a Carpenter for some Repairs in my  
 “ infernal Palace, and therefore when the Lease  
 “ is expired, I shall come myself and fetch thee.”

*Christopher* and the Devil mutually sign the Contract, and the Monkey made a Spring up the Chimney. The *Nazarene* wish'd for 6000 Pistoles, and that Sum was directly in his Pockets; he throws by his Plane and Chissel, and purchases a House; the 6000 Pistoles spent, 6000 more are wish'd for, and 6000 more he had, which he lays out on Furniture and Plate, so that it was Wish after Wish, ask and have, never Devil more punctual; and *Christopher*, much taken with his Honesty, could not bear to hear him reflected on for Want of Candour.

FIFTEEN Years of the Lease were expired, when one Night, as the Carpenter was entertaining some Friends at Supper (for such he had in Abundance, since his good Fortune) he order'd his Maid to go and fetch him out of the Cellar a particular Wine reserv'd for special Occasions: Down flies *Jenny*, but how strangely was she surprized when she saw, sitting upon one of the Barrels, a big lusty Man, dress'd in Black, who bid her go up and tell her Master to come quickly and speak with him, if he would not have his Neck wrung in Presence of his Guests: The Maid, frighten'd almost to Death, call'd her Master aside, and delivered her Message, and by her Description of the Man, he concluded it must be his Friend the Devil, and went boldly down Stairs with his Contract in his Hand, to let him see that the Lease was but half expired, and that he had mistaken the Date.

“ Well, says the Phantom, as soon as he enter'd  
 “ the Cellar, I come to tell thee, thou hast but an

“ Hour to live. My Lord, answer’d *Christopher*,  
 “ your Lordship is in a Mistake by fifteen Years,  
 “ here’s my Contract. How long did I promise  
 “ thee Life? said *Belzebub*. Thirty Years, reply’d  
 “ *Christopher*. Very well, answer’d the Devil,  
 “ don’t fifteen Years of Days, and fifteen Years  
 “ of Nights, make up the Account? this is our Me-  
 “ thod of Computation, and ’tis not very likely  
 “ that, to please thee, we shall make any Altera-  
 “ tion in our Calculation of infernal Years.”

CHRISTOPHER returned to his Company, who soon perceiving him quite alter’d in his Looks, ask’d the Reason; and he told them his unhappy Case. “ Take Courage, says a *Norman* Priest, “ who, by good Luck, was one of the Guests, “ go down to the Cellar with this Candle in your “ Hand, and only ask the Devil to prolong your “ Life as long as it burns.” Down goes *Christo- pher* to present his Petition to *Belzebub*, who, to shew him that he was a good-natur’d Devil in the main, tho’ he calculated the Years otherwise than we do, granted his Request; upon which the Priest, without Loss of Time, dipp’d it in Holy Water, that the Devil might never have Power to seize or put it out: Honest *Belzebub* being fairly out-witted by this Stratagem, was even forced to trudge back to Hell through a Hole which he made in the Cellar Floor, of which none ever since could sound the Bottom. The *Nazarene* was obliged to undergo a long Penance for his Crime, and the Monks laid hold of the consecrated Candle, which has brought them in more Money than *Christopher* got from *Old Nick*.

CONSIDER the Credulity of the People, and judge if the Extravagancies into which their Weakness leads them, are to be wholly ascrib’d to their Ignorance, or to the Impositions of Monks, who deceive and delude them.

TAKE



TAKE Care of thyself; and if thou canst, write me something entertaining from *Genoa*.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXXIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THE Familiarity that I have contracted with some learned Men of this Country, has intirely turned my Mind to Philosophy: I'm greatly astonished when I consider what a vast Difference there is betwixt one Man and another: From the Genius, Knowledge, and Penetration of *Des Cartes*, I turn to a Peasant employ'd in his daily Task of digging the Ground, which, with Eating and Drinking, is the Business of Life, and the whole of his Care; and, from the Comparison, I can't but conclude that his Soul is more distant from a Philosopher's, than from a Dog's, less superior to this, than inferior to that: What can a Peasant boast of but what is common to the lowest Animal? he is subject to Passions, Friendship and Gratitude have some Influence on him, and he distinguishes Good from Evil, according to the Notions that he has of them: A Dog, carefully train'd up, loves his Master, follows and defends him, and some have died with Grief and Sorrow; here then are Passions common to both. Let us now examine if the latter makes no Distinction betwixt Good and Evil; he takes care not to void his Excrements in certain Rooms, nor to touch Meat laid up in certain Places, where he at any

Time made free with it, and was beat, being still afterwards, when the Temptation offered, preposseſſed, that touching any thing in that Place, muſt be a Fault\*; but I go farther, and maintain that this Conduct in the Dog evidently proves that his

\* *Postremū quid in hāc mirabile tanto pene eſt Re,  
Si Genus humanum, cui Vox & Lingua vigeret,  
Pro vario Senſu varias Res Voce notaret,  
Cum Pecudes mutæ, cum denique Sacra Ferarum  
Diſſimiles ſoleant Voces, variasque ciere,  
Cum Metus, aut Dolor eſt, & cum jam Gaudia gliſcunt?  
Quippe etenim id licet ē Rebus cognoscere apertis,  
Irritata Canum cum primū magna Molosſum,  
Mollia Fiſſa premunt duros nudantia Dentes;  
Longē alio Sonitu Rabie deſtricta minantur:  
Et cum jam latrant, & Vocibus omnia complent,  
At Catulos blandē cum Lingua lambere tentant,  
Aut ubi eos lactant Pedibus Morſaque peten es,  
Spenſis teneros imitantur Dentibus Hauſtus;  
Longē alio Pacto Gamitu Vocis adulant:  
Et cum deſerti banbantur in Edibus, aut cum  
Plorantes fugiunt ſummiſſo Corpore Plagas.*

Lucret de Rerum Nat. Libr. V. Verſ. 1058.

Thus paraphraſed:

Why ſtrange! and why ſhould we pretend to blame,  
The giving to each different Thing a Name?  
Since Man the Organs fit for Speech has got,  
To tell when he is happy, or when not:  
The Author who this mighty Work has wrought,  
Should we not praiſe in Word as well as Thought?  
We ſee the Beaſts in different Tones expreſs,  
When they are happy, or when in Diſtreſs:  
Thus ſnarling Currs, when they begin to grin,  
Speak plain the Rage that blows the Coal within;  
And when, in ſilent Night, the yelling Notes  
Buſt out as Thunder from their hollow Throats:  
Or, when we hear the fawning Spaniel ſhriek,  
While he's ſhut up, or feels the Maſter's Whip;  
How diff'rent is the grating, doleful Song,  
From ſofter Accents of the tuneful Tongue,  
When he's at play, or wantons with his Young?

The Curious may look into Mr. Creech's Tranſlation of this Paſſage of Lucretius, and the preceeding Paſſage in Page 210.

his Mind is capable of the three Operations of Logic, and I see no Reason why a Shag-Dog, or a Mastiff, may not be as good a Logician, as a Professor of Cardinal *Mazarin's* College.

THE first Operation of the human Mind is Conception, the Second to range the Thoughts, and the Third to draw a just Consequence; now I can plainly perceive these three different Operations in a Dog: When I would teach him to leap over a Stick, when he leaps, I stroke him, first Thought; when he won't leap, I beat him, second Thought; he continues leaping, the Consequence of the two first Thoughts: So that the Dog reasons thus, If I leap, I'm carress'd; if I don't leap, I'm beat; therefore I'll leap.

HISTORY furnishes us with a thousand Passages, proving that Beasts have Understanding, and are capable of Reasoning. *Montaigne*, an excellent *French* Author, speaks of Oxen that understood Arithmetick; they were employed in turning the Winder of a Well a hundred Times a Day, and when the Number was performed, not one Step more would they go\*: These Oxen were Mathematicians, without the Elements of *Euclid*; and it must be allowed that they had a Method of Computation. for determining the Number of Rounds.

FROM an Enquiry into the Knowledge and Understanding of a Dog, let us take a View of those

\* The Oxen employed for turning great Wheels, to which Buckets were fasten'd to draw up Water for the Royal Gardens of *Susa* (as practis'd in *Languedoc*) were to make a hundred Turns each, and were so accusom'd with this Number, that no Compulsion would have oblig'd them to make one Turn more than their Number, which once finish'd, they directly stopp'd short. We are past the State of Infancy, before we can count a hundred, and have not long since discover'd Nations who have no Knowledge of Numbers.

*Montaigne's* Essays, Lib. II. Chap. xii. pag. 151,

those Faculties in a Country Clown: His daily Motions are as regular as a Clock, he gets up in the Morning, labours the Ground, eats and drinks at certain Hours, goes to Bed at Night, and rises next Morning to do just as he had done the Day before, so that the first and last Days of his Life are much about the same; he knows no more of the Secrets of Nature, or of the hidden Springs of Soul and Mind, but what outward Objects, presented to his Sight, teach him; and if his Conceptions are above the Instinct of Beasts, the Superiority is very inconsiderable. What vast Difference betwixt the Penetration of *Des Cartes*, and such a Peasant! I'm astonish'd to see this Philosopher measuring the Course of the Stars, and their Distance, foretelling, even to the remotest Ages, their Eclipses and Motions; but I am still more surprized when he teaches me to know myself, and, by unwrapping the Soul of the Bodies which cover it from Sight, gives me a Notion of its Essence, and proves its Spirituality; his Justness of Thought and Reasonings, are invincible Arguments, and I spare the Clown for the Sake of the Philosopher.

THE *Nazarene* Doctors have exclaimed against the Opinion which places Beasts in the Rank of meer Machines, and in this they oppose the System most agreeable to the Spirituality of Mens Souls; for if it be asserted that Brutes have a material Soul, it must be allowed that the moving Power and Faculty of Thinking are not incompatible with Matter: Now if Matter is capable of being rais'd to a certain Degree of Knowledge and Understanding, by refining this Matter it may arrive at a higher Point of Perfection, from a Dog to a Peasant, and from a Peasant to a Philosopher.

THERE have been eminent Men who believed the Soul to be material, tho' immortal: Several ancient Philosophers were of this Opinion, as also

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one of the first and most celebrated of the *Nazarene* Doctors \*. “ Whatever is not Matter, said he, is “ nothing; but the Soul is something, therefore it is “ material.” But there is nothing so easy as to prove the Possibility of the Soul’s being Spiritual. God is a Spirit; he exists: The Soul may therefore be Spiritual, and exist †.

THERE have been Philosophers so far wrapt up in Error, as to assert that God himself was material, and that the Divinity consisted of a subtile Matter, constituting the Soul of the Universe, and diffused over all ‡. This is almost the very System of

\* *Cum autem sit (loquitur de Animâ) habeat necesse est aliquid per quod est; si habet aliquid per quod est, hoc erit Corpus ejus. Omne quod est Corpus est sui Generis; nihil est incorporale, nisi quod non est.* Tertullian de Carne Christi. Cap. XI.

† This Argument could be no ways puzzling to Tertullian; for though he believed God to be a Spirit, he understood by a Spirit a corporeal Nature, but extremely fine and delicate: Who can deny, says he, that God is not a Body, tho’ he be a Spirit? Every Spirit is a Body, and has the Form that is proper to it. Quis enim negabit Deum esse Corpus, etsi Deus Spiritus est? Spiritus etiam Corpus sui Generis, in sua Effigie. *Tertull. adver. Prax.* Cap. VII. — All the ancient Philosophers, excepting Plato, who nevertheless had also mistaken Notions of the Nature of God, believed that he was composed of a Matter extremely subtile; this being what they meant by the Word Spirit. Several of the Fathers of the Church have given into the same Error, of which the Readers may see a Proof in the *Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters.* Letter I.

‡ This was the Opinion of several ancient Philosophers, particularly the *Stoicks*. Virgil has elegantly describ’d the System of the Soul of the World.

Principio Cælum, & Terras, Camposque liquentes  
Lucentemque Globum Luna, Titaniaque Astra,  
Spiritus intus alii; totamque infusa per artus  
Mens agitat Molem, & Magno se Corpore miscet.  
Inde Hominum Pecudumque Genus, Vitæque Volantum,  
Et quæ marmoreo fert Monstra sub Equore Pontus.  
Igneus est ollis Vigor, & celestis Origo  
Seminibus; quantum non noxia Corpora tardant,  
Terrenique hebetant Artus moribundaque Membra,

226 JEWISH LETTERS.

of *Spinoza*, and some other Atheists, of which I have shewn the horrid Falshood in a former Letter \*.

Is not a God liable to be divided into a hundred thousand Parts, a very respectable Divinity! For every thing that's Matter, may be divided, and so may God, if he's material. *Spinoza*, no Doubt, bantered

*Hinc metuunt, cupiuntque dolent, gaudentque neque Auras  
Respiciunt clausa Tenebris & carcere caco.*

Virg. *Æneid.* Lib. VI. v. 721; &c.

Thus translated by Mr. Dryden :

Know first that Heaven and Earth's compacted Frame,  
And flowing Waters, and the starry Flame,  
And both the radiant Lights, " One common Soul  
Inspires and feeds, and animates the Whole."  
This active Mind infus'd through all the Space,  
Unites and mingles with the mighty Mass:  
Hence Men and Beasts the Breath of Life obtain;  
And Birds of Air, and Monsters of the Main:  
Th' Ætherial Vigor is in all the same,  
And every Soul is fill'd with equal Flame.  
As much as earthly Limbs, and gross Allay  
Of mortal Members, subject to Decay, }  
Blunt nor the Beams of Heav'n, and Edge of Day. }  
From this coarse Mixture of terrestrial Parts,  
Desire and Fear by Turns possess their Hearts,  
And Grief and Joy: Nor can the grov'ling Mind, }  
In the dark Dungeon of the Limbs confin'd, }  
Assert the native Skies, or own its Heavenly Kind.

\* The XXXIst Letter. *Spinoza* asserts that All is in God, and that All is God; which is the same Tenet as that of the Soul of the World.

Ethices Propositio XV. de Deo.

*Quidquid est in Deo est, & Nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi, potest.*  
Demonstratio.

*Præter Deum nulla datur, neque concipi potest substantia (per XIV Proposit.) hoc est (per Defin.) Res quæ in se est, & per se concipitur. Modi autem (per Defin. V.) sine substantia nec esse, nec concipi possunt, quare hi in sola Divina Natura esse & per ipsam solam concipi possunt. Atqui præter Substantias & Modos, nihil datur (per Axiom I.) Ergo, nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi potest. Spinozæ Opera*

Posth. Ethices. Part I. pag. 12.

tered the *Nazarenes*, who believe three Persons in God, at the same Time that he himself, by his System, believes there are Millions. Such a ridiculous Sentiment rendered God perpetually contrary to himself; for when certain Quantities of Matter could not agree, two Gods disputed with one another, so that all Men being Portions of the Divinity, it must be fully'd with all their Crimes, and consequently it must be no more said, "That a Robber has killed an honest Man, but that a roguish God has kill'd an honest God."

CONSIDER, my dear *Isaac*, if there can be any thing so monstrous as to deny the Spirituality of God! It must either be asserted that he is not existent, or acknowledged that he is not material. I have, in one of my former Letters, treated fully on the Necessity of a Being sovereignly perfect, powerful, and intelligent, and on the extravagant System of Atoms. A Man must be deprived of common Sense who can imagine that Chance has produced the admirable Order of the Universe, and that the same Chance, nothing else but a Confusion, is capable of supporting it; so that Order and Harmony are, by such a Scheme, a Consequence of perpetual Disorder; and blind Destiny made the Author of Things, which we can't conceive how the highest and wisest Prudence is capable of producing. If it then be clear and evident, that there is a God, and that he is a Spirit, why may not our Soul be so too? If there's any existing Thing more perfect than Matter, as we agree, may not our Souls be of the same Quality as that Being of which we can have no perfect Knowledge?

I CAN see no Reason to make us disbelieve the Immateriality of the Soul; but I still find less to make us doubt of its Immortality, which is a necessary Consequence of the Existence of a God:  
The

The supreme Being, in creating Man, endowed him with the Faculty of knowing him; not innately, but by the Impulse of Reason; being persuaded, that every body who contemplates the Order and Regularity of the Universe, must feel within himself that some thing sovereignly Grand and Just governs the World. Now, God having granted to us the necessary Faculty of knowing him, did, no Doubt, intend that we should serve and honour him; otherwise, to what Purpose is such Knowledge? If it therefore be his Command and Pleasure that we should serve him, it must be agreeable to his Justice to punish the Violaters of his Law, and to reward those who observe it; and for the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, we must be out of the World, and the Soul must be immortal. It would be in vain to urge, that God can reward and punish in this World, no Doubt but he can; but he seldom does it, for daily Experience teaches us evidently that the most profligate Men have been perfectly happy to their dying Hour. From the Prosperity of the Wicked, I draw a new Argument for the Immortality of the Soul: God would be unjust, a Thing impossible, if, when he has ordered Men to do Good, and avoid Evil, he should favour those who offend, and punish those who obey him: It therefore follows necessarily that Rewards are reserved till after Death. I know that some impious and wicked Wretches have maintained there was neither Good nor Evil, and that Mens Prejudices formed the only Difference. The Brute-Creation cries shame to such who are so blind as to maintain such an extravagant Thesis, for they respect those of their own Species. A Dog can't be tempted to bite his Master, he looks upon him as his Benefactor, and suffers from him what he would not bear from another; he is sensible and persuaded that



that Ingratitude is an Evil, and Men affect to be ignorant of it : But who is he that is not persuaded, however wicked he may be, that the Law of Nature forbids him to do to others, what he would not have them to do to himself? Prejudice a-part, there's no Villain, or Robber, be he ever so hardened, who does not feel his Crime; at least there's no denying but that, when he assassinate a Man, he would not willingly be so served himself: This very Sentiment is enough to distinguish Good and Evil. If they are therefore different, God must judge them differently; and if he delays it in this World, his Justice is the more rigorous in the next.

THE greatest Part of those who deny the Immortality of the Soul, only maintain this Opinion, because they wish it, vainly imagining thereby to calm the Remorse with which they are perpetually haunted; but in the Height of Pleasures and Debaucheries, Truth forces her Way to their Minds, and there begins the Punishment to which they are doom'd after Death.

I KNOW nothing so mortifying to human Vanity as the Idea of Annihilation, there's something in't capable to throw into Dispair; a Man must be very much a Stranger to the Value of Conception, Thought, and Reasoning, who can bear the Thoughts of being one Day deprived of them.

FAREWEL, my dear *Isaac*, and shun all Commerce with the Impious and Libertines, lest the Justice of Heaven should involve thee in their Punishment.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER XXXIV.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

GALLANTRY prevails at *Genoa* as much, if not more, than in any Town in *Italy*, and one would think that *Cupid* had here fixed his Residence: The *Italians*, every where else severe and jealous, are here the very Patterns of gentle and indulgent Husbands; all the Ladies have their *Sigisbies*, a Name given to the Husband's Bosom-Friend, and the Wife's Gallant, in the Opinion of the Publick. This Custom passes for a Piece of Pleasantry, and the Husbands depend more on the Fidelity of the *Sigisbies*, than on that of their Wives: The close Friendship that unites them, is an infallible Bridle, they think, to the Violence of Passion. A Man must be extremely foolish and weak to imagine that Friendship can conquer Love; sometimes it may happen, but in the common Course of Things, neither Glory nor Virtue can stop the Torrent of this Passion.

WE have seen in all Ages the greatest Men liable to the greatest Follies; *Mark-Antony* idolized *Cleopatra*, and lost both the Empire and Life for her Sake; and, which is more astonishing than all, he, to whom *Julius Caesar* owed the Conquest of the World, fled at the Battle of *Actium*.

WITHOUT going to search for such distant Instances of the surprizing Weaknesses of great Men, our own Age is Witness of the strange Medley of Inconsistencies in one of the greatest Monarchs

Monarchs that ever sway'd the Scepter, or presid'd over Mortals\*, a vast Genius, and capable of executing the greatest and most difficult Projects, the new Legislator of his Dominions; the tutelar God of a dejected King†; and the Conqueror of a second *Alexander*‡, yielded to the Charms of a common Soldier's Wife, and rais'd her to the Rank of an Empress.

LOVE surmounts all Obstacles, and when once it has got the Mastery of Hearts, it commands the other Passions: I confess that it does not directly debauch Virtue, but disguises it so well, that it becomes almost useless. Natural Equity, which all pretend to follow, is written in no other Books but our Hearts; we only perceive it through the Vail of our Passions, and it assumes the Form which they give it: We often take Vice for Virtue, and consecrate our Follies under the Names of Generosity, Pity, and Tenderneſs. A Man, whom Love forces to betray his Friend, lays the Fault on an unknown Power, on a Byass which all his Efforts cannot master, and fancies that these Reasons justify his Conduct; thus, by little and little, sunk in the Gulf of Vice, he thinks himself not far removed from the Path of Virtue.

I DON'T look upon Friendship as any Security against Love; if I were a *Genoese*, I should not be very fond of my Wife's having a *Sigisby*, or a titular Lover, who, under the Pretext of an established Custom of no Consequence, may, when he thinks fit, deceive me, and baffle all my Precautions: Tho' born in the *Levant*, I am not jealous, and my Opinion, as to the *Sigisbies*, is what any reasonable Man ought to have. We must not, as the *Mahometans* and *Italians*, be in perpetual Fears about our Wives Fidelity, nor,

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as

\* Peter I. Czar of Muscovy. † Augustus King of Poland.

‡ Charles XII. King of Sweden.

as the *Genoese* and the *French* in general, give Occasion to it: To expose our Wives to dangerous Trials is ridiculous, not less than to push a Man into a slippery Road, and require him not to make a false Step.

THIS Liberty, which the Women at *Genoa* enjoy, renders Society agreeable and lovely, and there's not a Town in *Italy* where a Traveller or a Stranger can be more agreeably diverted. The *Genoese* are polite enough, and receive those who are recommended to them very affably: *Moses Caro* gave me a Letter to the Senator *Doria*, to whom they give the Title of Prince, he received me very graciously; yet, through all his Civility, I could perceive that Air of Grandeur and Vanity, so peculiar to the Great: There's a Proverb in *Italy* that three Sorts of Animals are insupportably arrogant, Cardinals, Dukes, and *Genoese* Senators. This Prince *Doria*, to whom I paid my Respects, is of a Family whose Pride springs with the Blood: His Father, a Man of a ridiculous Vanity, was fond of big Horses, tall Servants, large Apartments, &c. his Table was served with huge Dishes, and large Plates, &c. he chose a Wife of a giantick Size, preferably to one much richer, but not so tall, and when any spoke to him, he always stood a tip-toe, that he might appear taller.

THIS, in my Opinion, is a most ridiculous Grandeur: How dispicable must a Man be, in the Eyes of a Philosopher, who makes Merit to consist in the Size of Horses and Domesticks, this is however on what the Great found a Part of their Glory, and in their Riches resides their Genius and their Wit. Strip a Lord of his rich Dress, deprive him of the Pleasure of entertaining you with his Equipages, Hunting Matches, and Midnight Revelling, you'll find him, as to his Person, an aukward clumsy Creature, that owes his Shape



to the Dexterity of the Taylor, and a Load of Lace; and the concealing of what's frightful in a Part of his Countenance, to the Art of his Peruke-maker; and then, as to his Intellectuals, they're dull, stupid, and low, so that his *Valet de Chambre*, in Comparison, is a *Demosthenes*.

IF the Men of Quality were sensible how ridiculous their extravagant Vanity makes them, they would perhaps endeavour, by another Method, to acquire the Esteem of the Publick: If they affect haughty Airs, only to procure Respect, I pity their Blindness in chusing the Means which must remove them the furthest from their Aim: Merit, Valour, and Probity, are the Virtues that attract the Heart; but Pride, Rudeness, Scorn, and Insolence, are returned with publick Hatred and Indignation: Constraint, 'tis true, hinders it from breaking out; the Rank of those hated and despised, forces to Silence, but this very Restraint makes such Affronts the more insupportable, and augments the Disgust of those who are forced to bear them.

MEN have inwardly a Byass to Equality, and are concerned to see others more happy than themselves, and who often, without Merit, enjoy all the Advantages of Fortune: This Jealousy of the common Part of Mankind, against those who are in eminent Posts, cannot be defeated but by a Virtue which silences Envy, and forces it to confess, that Grandeurs join'd to Merit are its just Reward.

I TOLD thee in my last Letter how little the greatest Part of the *Genoese* were sensible of true Glory and the Good of their Country; so see we that for near three hundred Years the Republick has been declining: The Avarice of Men in Office, and their Misunderstandings, have been fatal to this State. The City of *Savona*, eight Leagues

from *Genoa*, having several Times rebelled, on Account of the Oppressions, it was debated in Senate, whether it ought not to be intirely destroyed. "Gentlemen, said a Senator of the "*Doria* Family, I would advise you to send "such a Governor to *Savona* as the two last "were, since you design to destroy that City you "can't fall upon an Expedient that will do it more "effectually." This ironical Advice rous'd the Senators out of their Lethargy, and made them see their Error; the two last Governors were called to an Account, and punished for their Misdemeanors. If the same Conduct had been held with Respect to the Island of *Corfica* (of whose Revolt I formerly gave thee an Account) that Country had still remained obedient to its Sovereigns. In the Beginning of their Rising up in Arms the *Genoese* thought they would be easily reduced, but, after having in vain employed all their Force, they were obliged to have Recourse to the Emperor for an Army, which puts me in mind of a Fable applicable to this Subject.

A GARDENER made a Complaint to the Lord of the Manor against a Hare that broke daily into his Garden, and destroyed his Cabbage: The Master undertook to punish this Criminal, and in that Design came to the Peasant's with half a Score Huntsmen, followed by thirty Dogs, and made more Havock in a Minute than the Hare could have done in a thousand Years. The Dogs pursued the poor Creature through every Corner of the Garden, and forced it at last to take to a Hole in the Wall, which the Gentleman advised the Countryman to stop up, congratulating him on the Flight of his Enemy. The Fate of the *Genoese* is equivalent to that of the Gardener: They have for a long Time paid six thousand *Germans*, who have cost them immense Sums. The Chiefs  
of

of the Rebels have made their Escape as the Hare in the Fable, and having implored the Emperor's Assistance and Mercy, he granted it, and obtained their Pardon from the *Genoese*; but this Prince had scarce retired his Troops from the Island of *Corfica*, when up starts a new Revolt; and the *Genoese* have had the Vexation to see their Money thrown out to no Purpose, and that they are under a Necessity of renewing a War, of which the Issue is doubtful.

DIRECT thy Answer to *Turin*, for To-morrow I set out for that City, and shall stay there some Days.

FAREWEL; may thou enjoy Peace, Wealth, and Health.

*Genoa*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXXV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I STILL expect the Books from *Amsterdam*, and I have writ several Times to *Moses Rodrigo*, pressing him to send them, but he puts me off to the End of the Month, and I can't forward them for *Constantinople* in less than six Weeks.

I HAVE made a general Survey of all the Book-sellers Shops in *Paris* for some new Performances to add to those which I shall receive from *Holland*, but have found nothing, besides what I have already sent thee, except two little Romances lately published: The First is intiled, *Les Egaremens du Cœur & de L'esprit*\*, the Author of which I have mentioned in former Letters†; his Stile is pure, he understands human Nature, and  
lays

\* The Delusions of the Heart and Mind. † *Crebillon* the Son.

lays open the Heart with a surprizing Clearness, and yet in this Work he has committed a Mistake so often condemned by him in others. The Reader must easily perceive that he affects much to be witty, and that, in some Parts, Nature is sacrificed to the false Glare; but this Fault, not indeed common, is repaired by a thousand Beauties. The Author of this Romance may be rather said to paint than write, and the Imagination is in Raptures with his Pictures: Let us see if it be possible to describe in a more lively Manner the first Surprise on a Heart than he does. "Without knowing  
 " from what Motive, I was watchful, I studied  
 " her Looks, and drew Instruction from her least  
 " Motions; such Obstinacy, in eternally gazing  
 " on her, drew at last her Attention: She look'd  
 " in her Turn, I fix'd her without knowing; and  
 " while under the Influences of the irresistible  
 " Charm, my Eyes spoke a Language which covered her with a Blush."

A MAN must have felt Love, or actually be its Slave, to draw so just and delicate a Picture of the amorous Passion: Neither Genius, Wit, nor Knowledge, can paint it so much to the Life; the Heart is the only Pencil, I mean a tender Heart that has felt its Power. The following Passage is the Character of a Prude in Love: "Wavering in Sentiments, by Turns kind and cruel,  
 " seeming to yield, that she may the more obstinately resist, with some soft Words raising to  
 " the Pinacle of Hopes, and with a severe Look  
 " precipitating into Despair, not leaving the poor  
 " Comfort of Uncertainty." One cannot help being struck with the artful and natural Resemblance in this Picture, but without a thorough Knowledge of the World and Mankind, there's no attaining to this Point; 'Tis a difficult Thing to unravel the different Forms, and, as one may  
 say,



say, the internal Springs of different Characters: An ordinary Writer sketches them, but a good Author paints and lays them open to View, such as they are.

SOME look upon a Romance as a Work composed only for Amusement; but this ought not to be the principal View: Every Book that mixes not the Useful with the Agreeable, deserves not the Esteem of Judges; for in diverting the Mind, the Heart must be instructed; 'tis by this that the greatest Men have render'd their Works valuable.

A WRITER of a fruitful Brain, who can lead his Readers through a dozen Volumes fill'd with Incidents artfully contrived and entertaining, and which, after all, are only proper to load our Imaginations with Rapes, Duels, Despair, Sighs, Groans, and Tears \*, has neither the Talent of instructing, nor attaining to Perfection, and only possesses the least Part of his Art. An Author who pleases without Instruction, is not long agreeable; his Book lies mouldy in the Shop, and his Works have the same Fate of old Sermons and dry Parnegyrick.

IN former Times Romances were nothing but a Rhapsody of tragical Adventures, which transported the Imagination, and distracted the Heart †; the Reading was agreeable, but feeding the Mind with Chimæras often hurtful, was the only Profit drawn from it: Youth greedily swallow'd up all the wild and monstrous Ideas of those fictitious Heroes, and the Probable seem'd dull and heavy to their unbounded Imaginations; but the Case is now alter'd; good Taste has exploded the supernatural, and substituted the reasonable; and, instead of a Number of Incidents with which the least Facts were over-charg'd, requires a plain and

\* *La Calprenède.* † *The Poldexandre of Gomberville, The Ariadna of Des Mantes, &c.*

and lively Narration, supported by Pictures presenting the Useful with the Agreeable.

SOME Authors have followed this Scheme, and, by their copying more or less after Nature, have in Proportion advanc'd towards Perfection \*.

OTHERS have gone from one Extreme to another, and, by affecting to appear natural, have fallen into the low and flat, neither pleasing nor instructing †.

SOME have had Recourse to insipid Allegory ‡, fancying that Novelty would please, but their Works dy'd in the Birth, and, for want of reading, escap'd Criticism.

IF bad Authors could but reflect on the Talents and Qualifications necessary for a good Romance, they would never fly to such Works for Refuge. A Man half starv'd, resolves to write for Bread; having neither Knowledge for History, nor Genius for Morality, he scribbles some Quires of Paper with Adventures dull and insipid, wretchedly contriv'd, and worse told, then carries this Work to the Bookseller, and if it's sold for double the Price of the Paper, he's well off. There's perhaps as much Wit, Knowledge of Mankind, and of their different Passions, required to compose a Romance, as to write a History: A thorough Acquaintance with Manners and Customs, demands a long Experience, and, to paint different Characters to the Life, a close Examination.

How can an Author, who is constantly in some Coffee-house, or in his Garret dawbing Paper, give a just Definition of a Prince, a Courtier, or a fine Lady? He never sees those Persons but in the Streets; and I scarce can think that the Dirt, with which he is splash'd by their Coaches, com-

\* The Prevot d' Exiles. See the *Bibliotheq. des Romans*. † Hist. of the Chevalier-des Effars, and the Countess de Merci, &c.

‡ Fanferedin, &c.

communicates their Sentiments; and yet there's not a wretched Author but puts what Words he thinks proper in the Mouths of Dukes and Dutchesses. When a Man of Fashion happens to throw his Eyes on these ridiculous Works, he's strangely surpriz'd to hear the Language of *Marget*, the Apple-woman, spoke by the Dutchess of \*\*\*\*\*, and the Marchioness of \*\*\*\*\*; yet, bad as these Books are, abundance of them are sold: Many People, intoxicated with Novelty, and who judge but superficially, buy those Works, and, by perusing them, their Taste is as much corrupted as that of the Author's.

DON'T be afraid, my dear *Isaac*, that such Books shall be of the Number of those I send thee: However much People at *Constantinople* are taken up with Romances and Novels, they must be instructive, as well as diverting.

THE second Book which I have bought, intitl'd *Memoirs of the Marquis de Mirmon*; or, *The Philosopher turn'd Hermit*, seems to be written with that View: The Author's \* Stile is lively and easy, and 'tis evident that he was acquainted with the Characters which he traces. Without pretending to rival the former Author in Wit, he every where presents Truth under a lovely Form; and if he's chargeable with any Fault, 'tis a certain Boldness of Expression; and some add to this a sort of Negligence very pardonable in a Man who writes so elegantly on most Subjects as he does; an Instance whereof thou'lt see in the following Picture of Solitude. " 'Tis not to be his  
" own Tormenter that a wise Man seems to shun  
" Society, he forms no new Laws for his Con-  
" duct, but submits to those already prescribed,  
" and if he lays himself under new Restrictions,  
" yet, reserving the Privilege of Change, he's still  
" the

\* Mr. le M. D'Argens,



“ the Master, and not the Slave; content with  
 “ restricting his Passions within the Limits of Reason, he pretends not to an absolute Conquest  
 “ of them, nor makes a frightful Monster of what  
 “ was formerly an innocent Amusement; in short,  
 “ he tastes in his Solitude all the Pleasures which  
 “ Men of Honour enjoy in publick Life, only  
 “ restraining them from running to Excess, and  
 “ becoming hurtful.

THERE are several other Passages in this Book equally remarkable for their Beauty and Exactness; such is the Discription of the Distaste that sometimes attends Marriage. “ Lovers always put the  
 “ best Side out: A Man who would please carefully conceals his Faults, and this Art is the  
 “ Woman’s peculiar Talent: For six long Months  
 “ two Persons study how to cheat one another,  
 “ at last they join in Wedlock, and their Disimulation proves a mutual Punishment during  
 “ Life.”

— I must be own’d, my dear *Isaac*, that the masterly Strokes of this Picture cannot but affect the Mind, the Thoughts present themselves to the Imagination in their bright and natural Colours, and charm it with their Justness. If Authors who write Romances in this new Taste, constantly attach’d to Truth, resist the Torrent of a new Mode, to which Performances of Wit are exposed, ’tis likely their Productions will be as useful to reform Manners as Comedy, since Romances will be made Pictures of human Life. The covetous Man will see himself so naturally painted, and the Coquet observe so much Likeness in her Picture, that Reflection, the Consequence of Reading, will be of more Use than the long Exhortations of a Monk, who has cried himself hoarse and fatigued his Audience.

AUTHORS

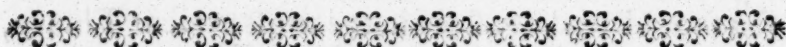


AUTHORS who compose Romances, ought to study Nature in their Pictures of Manners, and to unfold the most hidden Secrets of the Heart: As their Works are but ingenious Fictions, they can't please but in Proportion as they approach to Probability; every Thing that favours too much of the Marvellous, is no more esteem'd with People of Taste, than paltry Balder-dash; they commonly go together, and Authors who give into gigantick and unnatural Ideas, are mostly addicted to the declamatory Stile, aiming at pompous and unintelligible Expressions.

THE Stile of Romances ought to be plain, more florid than that of History, but less emphatical and majestick: Gallantry is the Soul of Romance; Grandeur and Justness that of History; a thorow Knowledge of the World is necessary for excelling in the former, and a Man must be learned, and a Politician, who would distinguish himself in the latter; good Sense, Perspicuity, Justness in Characters, true Pictures, Purity of Stile, are necessary in both: The Ladies are by Birth the Judges of Romances, and Posterity decides on History.

ADIEU, my dear *Isaac*. The Moment I receive the new Books from *Holland*, they shall be sent thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XXXVI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I CAN freely communicate my Thoughts to thee, and enjoy that Pleasure which so much sweetens the Conversation of Philosophers: Thy Title and Character of Rabby lay me under no Restraint

straint of disguising my Sentiments; thou allowest me to deposite in thy Breast my most secret Thoughts, and art not offended with my Doubts. Tell me, my dear *Isaac*, if thou art really persuaded that the *Israelites* alone are to be Partakers after Death of the Glory of the Almighty? For my Part, I can't but think this Opinion erroneous; and when thou hast duly examin'd the Matter, I doubt not but that thou'lt agree with me. Is it possible that a merciful God has created so many Millions of Men, to render them eternally miserable? Was it in their Power to spring from the Race of *Jacob*? and must they be punish'd for a Thing which they had no Hand in? Thou'lt perhaps answer, that we cannot know the immense Secrets of God, and that it belongs not to a finite Creature to penetrate into the deep Mysteries of an infinite Being; but my Question is not a Mystery, it's as evident as our Existence, and as easily demonstrated.

I DON'T think thou'lt deny this Principle, that as supreme Goodness and Justice are the Attributes of God, nothing can be good or just, but in so far as it resembles those divine Qualities. Let me now lay down a second Principle as certain as the former: Our Reason is the Gift of God, who can't deceive us; it's a Present made us, in order to know and serve him; if this Reason should lead us astray in the most evident Things, God would then deceive us; a Thing most absurd! he being Truth itself \*. Now this Reason  
shews

\* Nunc circumspectam diligentius anforte adhuc apud me alia sint ad quæ nondum respexi, nunquid ergo etiam scio quid requiratur ut de aliquâ eâ re sim certus? Nempe in hac prima cognitione nihil aliud est, quàm clara quædam & distincta perceptio ejus quod affirmo; quæ sane non sufficeret ut aliquid ita clarè & distinctè perciperem falsum esset. Ac proinde jam videor pro regulâ generali posse statuere, illud omne

shews and demonstrates clearly, that the Punishment of an involuntary Crime, and in which we have no Hand, is not consistent with Justice \*.

It would be trifling to alledge, that the Ideas which I have of Justice are deceitful; as they flow from my Reason, they can't deceive; nor can they be false, being verify'd by their Resemblance with the Goodness and Justice of God, of which my Reason is fully convinc'd.

SHAKE off for a Moment, my dear *Isaac*, the Prejudices of Youth, and, as a Philosopher, consider the Case of an honest *Nazarene* who lives at *Paris*; he believes and serves the same God that we do, and observes the Ten Commandments given to *Moses*: By the Prejudice of Education, he looks upon our holy Law as accomplish'd, and upon his own as the New Covenant: Thou knowest the Power of first Ideas with which we are inspir'd. 'Tis a Saying amongst *Arabian* Authors, that "Governors of Youth are the Stars which preside over their Nativity." How is it possible to believe that God binds up this *Nazarene* in

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Chains,

omne esse verum quod valde claré & distinctè percipio. —  
*Des Car. Medit. de prima Philosophia, &c. Med. III. pag. 15. Edit. Amstel.*

\* The first of God's Attributes which falls here under Consideration, consists in his being all Truth, and the Source of all Light; so that 'tis impossible he can deceive us, that's to say, directly be the Cause of the Errors to which we are subject and experiment in ourselves; for though the Art of deceiving, among Men, denotes a Subtilty of Mind, nevertheless the Inclination of deceiving never proceeds but from Malice or Fear and Weakness, and consequently cannot be attributed to God: From whence it follows, that the Faculty of Knowledge which he has given us, is never deceived with respect to any Object, so far as it perceives in that Object, that's to say, so far as it clearly and distinctly knows; because we should have Ground to suspect God of Deceit, if he had given it us so as to take Wrong for Right, and Error for Truth, when we use it as we ought.

*Philosophy of Reni Des Car. Part I. pag. 23 and 24.*

Chains, and hinders him from entering into the Faith of *Israel*, only to have the Pleasure of undoing him?

I TREMBLE at this impious Principle in some *Nazarene* Books, that it's necessary, for the Glory of God, some should be damned, as it is for the Majesty of Kings to have Galley-Slaves. Can the Misery of some unhappy Creatures be necessary for the Glory of that immense Being, who out of nothing has made all Things, and who in a Moment can destroy the whole Universe? If he punishes, 'tis the Effect of his Justice, and of the Order established by his Wisdom; but his Wrath falls only on Crimes which neither invincible Ignorance, nor a superior Power have occasion'd.

THE *Nazarenes* have several Doctors among them \*, whose Opinion appears to be very rational; they judge no-body, and, satisfied with honouring God, and professing the Religion which they think the purest and most conducive to Salvation, leave to Heaven the Determination of their Fate: I wish all our Rabbies were so wise, and had not such a high Notion of the *Jews*, as to imagine them the only Favourites of God, and that the Almighty was wholly taken up with a Handful of wandering Vagabonds: Our selfish Way of Thinking seems to me to be an Insult on the whole Race of Men: We are all the Children of *Adam*, and the one as well as the others, created by God; and it was in his Power to have made all Mankind *Israelites*. Can it be imagin'd that heform'd *Nazarenes* and *Mussulmen* only to make them miserable? and that Sovereign Goodness takes Delight in Cruelty and Injustice?

I KNOW that our Rabbies are stiff as to *Nazarene* Reprobation, and make it an essential Point  
of

\* The Protestants.



of our Religion; but I strip them of that Authority which they formerly usurped over our Hearts: Sound Philosophy teaches me to examine an Opinion before I embrace it. When I was young, Fear and Weakness led me into a Belief of whatever my Nurses, Parents, and Masters, were pleased to tell me; but Age has ripen'd my Understanding, so as to examine the Opinions I formerly receiv'd, and I believe the Rabbies no farther than their Decisions are agreeable to the clear and distinct Ideas which I have immediately received from God: I laugh within myself at the ridiculous Attachment of the *Jews* to the Fictions of the *Talmud*, and, satisfy'd with the Fundamentals of our Religion, I condemn the Superstitions.

I WOULD not confess such Sentiments to any Mortal but thy self; but I know that in reposing my Thoughts in thy Breast, they're confin'd in the Mansion of Truth and Silence. When I consider, in a certain Country, People professing a different Religion, know them to be Men of Honour and Honesty, and, by an Examination of their Manners, find them full of Candour and Probity, I can't imagine that God, just and merciful, should punish Men, who, in Obedience to the internal Legislator, I mean the Law of Nature and Conscience, are guilty of no other Crimes than professing the Religion of their Fathers, in which they were born: As it could not depend on their Choice to receive Life from one Father rather than another, I can't help thinking that there's a Barbarity in the Decisions of our Rabbies anent the Fate of *Nazarenes* after Death.

I RESOLVE, my dear *Isaac*, to be before-hand with some Objections that thou might'st make.

THE Existence of a God necessarily implies Service, and he himself has settled the Worship that ought to be paid, consequently there's no declining

it without being guilty of a Crime. This Argument suits all Religions; every one of them think their Worship according to the divine Word, and therefore my Answers to our Rabbies may serve to all the other Doctors who so boldly decide of Mens Salvation. I shall confine myself to the Words of some judicious *Nazarene* Doctors, who about two hundred Years ago reform'd many Abuses \*: Their Adversaries ask'd them, if they believed that the Persons adhering to the Faith and Opinions of the Sovereign Pontife could be saved?

" We damn none, answer'd they, 'tis bad Actions,  
 " and mortal Sins, that destroy Souls, and not  
 " the Pedantick Decision of weak Men. If this  
 " be the Case, said their Opponents, why don't  
 " you, for the more Security, embrace our Opinions?  
 " for we believe that you are damn'd, and  
 " therefore, in this Doubt, you ought to take the  
 " surest Side. Ours is so, replied, gravely, the  
 " Doctors; we grant, 'tis true, that in your Religion  
 " Men may be saved, but the Errors and Superstition  
 " with which it is tainted, render the Thing so difficult,  
 " that it's almost impossible; whereas in ours every  
 " Thing conducts to the Way of Salvation, and facilitates  
 " the Passage."

THERE'S no Doubt, my dear *Isaac*, but that God himself has enjoin'd a Worship, but 'tis to facilitate Mens Salvation, and not to destroy them; happy they to whom he has reveal'd it; but 'tis, in my Opinion, the Height of Impiety to say, that all the rest of Mankind are created to be damn'd †: The Road to Heaven may be more

\* The reformed Doctors at the Conference of *Poissy*.

† I can't conceive why the modern Catholick Divines obstinately damn all those who are out of the Pale of the Church, when several of the Fathers have decided, in clear and express Terms, that the Pagans who were virtuous, and who

more difficult to them; but if they are good, wise, and virtuous, the Almighty would rather miraculously draw them to him, than suffer Virtue to be requited with eternal Torments.

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who could have but little or no Knowledge of the Law of *Moses*, might however be saved. Now, I would gladly have a Reason assign'd why God should damn Men who never had any, or, at least, but very confused Notions of Christianity, when he has pardon'd those who could not be instructed in *Judaism*. The Church has so determin'd, will some Divine say, and we ought to submit to its Judgment. But this Church, whose Infallibility is so much extolled, must have probably thought otherwise in *St. Bernard's* Time, than now; for this Father, writing to *Hugo Victor*, says, That he could not believe the Commandment of God delivered to *Nicodemus* (*nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua, & spiritu sancto, non intrabit in regnum cœlorum. i. e.* Except a Man be born again of Water and the holy Spirit, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven) ought to be understood in its whole Extent, and only applied to those who had no Knowledge of it; the *Jews*, other Nations, and all the virtuous Pagans before Jesus Christ came into the World, having been cleansed from original Sin, and capable of Salvation, by living according to the Law of Nature. At vero, quis nescit, & alia, præter baptismum, contra originale peccatum, remedia antiquis non defuisse temporibus? *Abrahæ* quidam, & semini ejus, circumcisionis sacramentum in hoc ipsum traditum est; in nationibus verò quot quot inventi fideles sunt, adultos quidam fide & sacrificijs credimus expiatis, parvulis autem solum profuisse, imo & suffecisse, parentum fidem. *i. e.* Who is so ignorant as not to know, that, in old Times, there were other Remedies against original Sin besides Baptism? For this very End the Sacrament of Circumcision was delivered to *Abraham* and his Seed; and, in christian Nations, Persons come to Age, are expiated by Faith and Sacrifices; and the Faith of Parents not only profiteth, but even sufficeth for Infants. — *St. Bernard's LXXII Epist. to Hugo de St. Victor.*

*St. Thomas* asserts that the *Gentiles* could have saved themselves, tho' with greater Difficulty than the *Jews*. *Gentiles* perfectius & securius salutem consequantur sub observantijs legis, quam sub solâ lege naturale, & ideo ad eas admittebantur; sicut etiam nunc laici transeunt ad clericatum, & seculares ad Religionem, quamvis absque hoc possint salvari. *Thoma summa, in prim. secund. Quest. 96. Art. 5. i. e.* The *Gentiles* obtained Salvation with more Security and Ease, by

the



THE Difference of Religions in the World, made *Cardan* run into a wild Mistake, though no ways unbecoming the Disciple of judicial Astrology; he fancy'd that this Variety depended on the different Influences of the Stars; and our *European* Philosopher was pleas'd to make the *Jewish* Religion owe its Origin to *Saturn*; the Christian to *Jupiter*; the *Makometan* to *Mars*; and that of the *Pagans* to several different Constellations. Such are the Errors of those who take a far-about Way to seek for the Cause of a Thing at Hand, and which presents itself. Why should we attribute to the Stars what is occasioned by the Caprice and Inconstancy of Men? We see in all Religions new Opinions set up, the Professors whereof think themselves the only orthodox Believers, and Time so fortifies them in this new Faith, that whoever differs from them is look'd upon as guilty of Error; and blind to Truth. *Saturn* had no Concern  
with

the Observance of the Law, than by the Law of Nature alone, and therefore to such Observances were they admitted, as the Laity now pass to the clerical State, and the Seculars to stricter Orders, although they might be saved without it.

One of the greatest Divines, who lived a little before the Council of *Trent*, asserted, that the ancient and modern Pagans could be saved by living justly, tho' in an invincible State of Ignorance. *Quicumque fuerant, aut etiam modo sunt, ad quos non pervenerit evangelium, cum nullâ viâ humanâ consequi potuerint fidem Christi, tandiu inculpabilem illius ignorantiam habere veletiam habuisse sunt existimandi, quamdiu caruerint doctoribus a quibus discere potuerint, i. e. Whoever have been, or now are, to whom the Gospel has not reached, since they could by no human Means attain to Faith in Christ, their Ignorance cannot be charged upon them, so long as they wanted Doctors to teach them.* — *Andreas Vega de preparat. adult. ad justificat. Lib. VI. Cap. XVIII.*

I can't conceive why we should now believe what was laugh'd at two or three hundred Years ago, unless we can imagine, that our Divines are acting the Part of *Moliere's* Physicians, whom he introduces on the Stage, telling us, That tho', formerly, the Heart and Melt were on the Left Side, yet they are now placed on the Right,



with the ten Tribes who separated themselves to sacrifice on the Mountains, nor had the Brain of *Arius* any Dependence on *Jupiter*, notwithstanding the pretended Influences of the Stars, of which I have already shewn the Ridiculousness and Impossibility in former Letters.

THE Opinion of our Rabbies, as to *Nazarene* Reprobation, is a Consequence of our Nation's Vanity. Allow me to lay open my Heart, and to unfold its most secret Thoughts: Pride and Haughtiness have always made us the Objects of publick Hatred, to this very Day we lie under the same Imputation; and tho', as the Objects of the Contempt, Hatred, and Raillery of all Nations, we are dispersed all over the Earth, yet our Manner is not changed. I'm at a Loss how to account for this Vanity of ours; 'tis true, our Ancestors in the Days of *Solomon*, and some other victorious Kings, made a tolerable Figure in the World, but they have been often humbled by long and severe Captivities under the *Persians* and *Assyrians*, subdued afterwards by the *Greeks*, and destroyed by the *Romans*.

WE have ever been the Sport of all Nations, and should we trace ourselves back to remotest Times, even before our Departure from *Egypt*, what sorry Accounts of our Nation must we meet with. We read in the Fragments of *Maneth*, an *Egyptian* Priest, that, in the Reign of *Amenophis*, a Company of nasty leperous People left *Egypt*, under the Conduct of *Moses*, to go and settle in *Syria*. The Testimony of this Author is confirm'd by another celebrated *Greek* Author \*, who tells us, that two hundred and fifty thousand Lepers were banish'd out of *Egypt*, by Order of *Amenophis*. Several Historians differ as to the Name of the King who reigned when the *Jews* were chased out of *Egypt*,

\* *Cheremon*.

*Egypt*, but they all agree as to the Scabs and Botches, with which the most of them were covered: *Tacitus*, a famous *Roman* Author, speaks at large of this Matter, and fortifies the Opinion of others\*; we ought therefore to have less Vanity, and, far from despising other Nations, on Account of God's special Favours to us, remember, that 'tis a Proof of his sovereign Goodness to raise up the Humble, and abase the Mighty: Thus God, to manifest the Greatness of his Clemency, was pleased to take into particular Favour the vilest and most ungrateful People, of which the Despondency and Murmurings of our Fathers in the Desert, are evident Proofs: The *Nazarenes* are not so puffed up as we with the Favours which they think the Divinity has bestowed on them; they confess they were miserable *Gentiles*, but the Knowledge which they had afterwards of the true God, taught them to pity, and not despise Men whom they thought misled.

Farewel, my dear *Isaac*, take care to preserve thy Health.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*

LETTER

\* Plurimi auctores consentiunt, ortâ per *Egyptum* tabe, quæ corpora faderat, regem *Occhorim* adito *Hammonis* oraculo remedium petentem, purgare regnum, & id genus hominum, ut invisum Deis alias interras avehere jussum, sic conquistum collectumque vulgus; postquam vastis Locis relictum sit, cæteris per lachrymas torpentibus, *Mosem* unum exsulam monuisse, ne quam deorum hominumve opem expectarent, ab utriusque deserti, sed sibi-met ut duci cœlesti crederent, primo cujus concilio credentes præsentis miseriae pepulissent. i. e. Historians generally agree in this Point, that, *Egypt* being infected with Leprosy, King *Bochoris*, by Advice of the Oracle of *Ammon*, drove those that were smitten, out of his Country, as an useless Multitude, and odious to the Divinity; adding, that as they wander'd through the Deserts, and had lost all Courage, *Moses*, one of their Chiefs, advised them to expect no Succour from Gods nor Men, who had abandoned them, but to follow him as their cœlestial Guide, who would draw them out of Danger. — From *Ablansourri's* Translat. of *Tacit. Ann. Lib. V.*



## LETTER XXXVII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I HAVE been now, my dear *Monceca*, two Days at *Turin*, and I find that hitherto I had no just Notion of the *Piedmontese*; their Character is a Compound of the *French* and *Italian* Humours; Slaves to Fashion, and on the Punctilio of Compliment as much as the *French*, phlegmatick, revengeful Slaves to Monks, and bashful Lovers as the *Italians*, but then they have the Vanity of both.

*TURIN* is a beautiful City, full of magnificent and fine Houses: Those who frequent the Court affect the *French* Manners, but the Citizens copy after the *Italians*; yet neither the one nor the other intirely resemble those two Nations.

THE principal Assemblies and Rendezvouses of Gallantry are commonly in the Churches; there are few Days on which the Festival of some Saint is not celebrated; the People run from all Quarters to the Temple dedicated to such Saint, where there is an excellent Concert of Musick, and where they spend a Part of the Day. The Beaus, Ladies, and fashionable Clergy, are punctual Attendants at these Festivals \*, very much resembling those of ancient *Greece*. The Saint who is to be solemniz'd, has more or less Company, according to the Quality of the Musick that is to be perform'd in his Church: When it's a Saint of Distinction, and rich, such as *St. Ignatius*,

\* These Festivals are common all over *Italy*.



*tius*, or *St. Philip de Neri*; a Musician who never touches a Violin but on solemn Occasions, and when he is paid at a high Rate, draws a vast Concourse of People. *St. Francis* and *St. John de Matba* being poor, must take up with ordinary Musicians.

WHEN these Assemblies, which the *Piedmontese* call *Saluto*, are over, they repair to the publick Walks, where they take the Air till the Dusk of the Evening. The Glacis betwixt the Town and Citadel is most frequented during the Summer Season; 'tis here the *Piedmontese* Nobility, with Heads erect as Ostriches, with Hands in their Sides, and Eyes that speak their Pride, display a Figure half *French* half *Italian*; from the Walks they go and refresh in the Coffee-houses, with some iced Gelly, which commonly is their Supper\*: The *Piedmontese* are extremely frugal; a rare Quality, were it not the Effect of Avarice: They are mightily pleased, that the Heat of the Climate furnishes them with a Pretext for not supping; but this Regimen, so necessary to their Health, is quite forgot when they're under Invitation to a good Supper.

THE *Italians*, in general, have been for some time past pretty ignorant†, and the *Piedmontese* are more so. I scarce believe there ever was an Author among them whose Reputation extended above ten Leagues round; none of the *Italian* Writers of the least Note are of their Country: A *Piedmontese*, whom I reproach'd with this, answered me very gravely, that I was in a Mistake, since *Plautus* and *Terence* were of *Piedmont*. I ask'd him when this new Discovery had been made?  
his

\* This is also the Supper of all the *Italians*.

† This requires an Explanation: I don't look upon Poets, who have only the Talent of making Verses, or Authors of Romances, to be Men of very great Learning; I only speak of modern *Italians*, amongst whom it cannot be asserted there's either a Philosopher or an Historian of Distinction.



his Answer was, that he knew not, but had heard it asserted by a very able Man, in a Coffee-house frequented by the Learned of *Turin*, and the Place of Rendezvous of the Wits of this Country. What a Surprise, my dear *Monceca*, must thou be under, wert thou at once to be transported from the Academy of Sciences to this paltry Assembly of Schoolists, where I had Yesterday the Mortification to hear more impertinent Absurdities, than a Half of the Spanish Divines ever committed to Paper!

Two Causes may be assign'd for the Ignorance of the *Piedmontese*, their vain slothful Temper, and their slavish Submission to the Inquisition: When they can read a *Latin* Bible and a Mass-Book they reckon themselves among the Learned of the first Class; they admire the wonderful Efforts of their Imagination, and are under the greatest Surprise how it was possible for their Understandings to attain to such Perfection: 'T would be truly dangerous for them to penetrate farther, for the least Light that would dispel their Darkness, might draw the Indignation of the Inquisition upon them; Ignorance, in the Judgment of Monks, being the Basis of Tranquility.

THE *Piedmontese* want Vivacity to distinguish themselves in the *Belles Lettres*, nor can they come up to the Authors which other Parts of *Italy* have produced; there's a greater Difference between a *Florentine* and a *Piedmontese*, with regard to the Liveliness of Imagination, than betwixt a *Frenchman* and a *Muscovite*: I can by no Means account for such a Disproportion, and without being myself a Witness of the Truth of the Fact, I should never have believed it. Some are of Opinion that 'tis no surprizing Thing to see two neighbouring People, of the same Language and Manners, so different in Genius; and, to prove this, bring as an Instance the lively and sprightly Wit of the Na-

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tives

tives of *Languedoc* and *Provence* compared with the Dullness and Stupidity of the *Auvernacs* and *Savoyards*. The *Flemings* are of all People the most superstitious; a Traveller may see more religious Toys in the Church of *Ghent* than in all *Italy* and *Spain*: But their Neighbours, the *Dutch*, have banished Bigotry and Monkish Devotion out of their Provinces, so that every *Dutchman*, let his Religion be what it will, may be called a Philosopher, who has refined and brought it within the Rules of good Sense: A *Nazarene* Papist at *Amsterdam* is a more reasonable Creature than such a Man at *Rome*; an Enthusiast is not so wild a Fanatick there, as in the *Cevenne* Mountains in *France*; and a Quaker less ridiculous than at *London*: This is, perhaps, the Consequence of a well governed State; the Examples of Prudence and Moderation in the Protestant *Nazarenes*, who are the chief Men of the Republick, have an Influence over the rest of the People.

THO' we may be difficulted to assign a Cause for the Difference of Genius in the *Dutch* and *Flemings*, the Natives of *Province* and *Savoy*, 'tis nevertheless certain that so it is, and even surprizing between the great Men of the two latter Countries.

THE *Savoyards* have acquired no Fame in the *Republick of Letters*, nor in the Invention of Arts, unless we ascribe to the Force of Imagination the Science of Chimney-sweeping, and of travelling to foreign Countries with their Marmottes and Monkies, Talents which I think will scarce intitle them to a Place in the *French Academy*, or that of *La Crusca* in *Italy*: *Provence* has successively produced many great Men, and, not to mention the *Troubadours*, the first Poets of the *Gauls*, and Natives of this Country, in these latter Times, the World lies under strong Obligations to it for eminent Authors, such as *Gassendi*, the famous Philo-

Philosopher; *Massillon*, the renown'd Orator; Father *Thomassin*, an Historian worthy of the highest Commendation; *Peiresc*, the celebrated Antiquarian; *Tournefort*, the most skillful of the Botanists; all born much about the same Time in this Country, from whence the Sciences spread into the rest of *France*. The *Troubadours*, Story-Tellers, Singers, Jugglers, Minstrels, assembled at the Court of the Counts of *Provence*, where they acted Pieces of Wit of their own composing, called, *Servantes*, *Tençons*, and the *Court of Love*\*: The other People among the *Gauls*, envious of these Diversions, and anxious to share in them, learnt of the *Troubadours* to make Verses and Songs; and *Thibaud*, Count of *Champagne*, who found Means to draw them to his Court, signaliz'd himself in this kind of Poetry; he was passionately in Love with Queen *Blanche*, Mother to *Louis IX.* and the Songs he made for her bear Witness for his Love to this very Day.

THE *Troubadours*, Fiddlers and Ballad-fingers, &c. soon acquired such a general Esteem all over *France*, that all proper Methods were taken for their commodious Travelling from one Part of the Kingdom to another, and great Encouragement given in order to engage them to fix their Residence in it. *Louis* issued a Decree by which all Poetasters were exempted of any Toll or Duty, &c. on reciting a Staff of a Song to the Toll-gatherers; and that Strollers were to enjoy the same Franchises by making their Marmottes or Monkies shew some Tricks; from thence came the Proverb, *Payer en Gambades, et en Monnoie de Singe* †. The Case is much altered since that Time; some Natives of *Provence*, whom I often saw at *Galata*, *Rome*, and *Genoa*, assured me that

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a Toll-

\* Satyrs and Love-Sonnets. † A French Proverb, which in English is to pay our Debts with Flim-flams.



a Toll-gatherer, or a Customhouse-Officer, would not bate a Farthing of their Duties for the Rehearsal of the whole Tragedy of *Phædra*. 'Tis just so at *Turin*, the Original of *Hierosolyma*, *Liberata*, or of *Pastor Fido*, repeated with ever so good a Grace, would scarce purchase a Morfel of Bread,

WE find in this City great Numbers reduced to Want by two succeeding bad Crops: The Burghers, touch'd with their Misery, endeavour to assist them; and the Monks surmounting their usual Avarice, distribute Bread and Soop on certain Days of the Week, at the Gate of their Convents. The *Nazarene* Friars, at *Rome*, have this Custom; and in most of the Monastries the Beggars receive every Day some small Portion of the immense Wealth which they amass.

UPON this Head let me tell thee a Passage of a *Spaniard*, which perfectly characterises the ridiculous Vanity of his Nation. Great Numbers of *Castilian*, *Arragon*, and *Andalusian* Students come to *Rome*, in hopes to obtain some Benefice from the Sovereign Pontife, and beg their Way from *Madrid* to *Italy*: by the Help of an Oil-cloth Collar or Cape, adorn'd with some Shells, and a long Stick call'd a Pilgrim's Staff, they meet with Assistance and Charity wherever they come, the *Nazarenes* having the same Regard for the Pilgrims of St. *James*, and our Lady of *Loretto*, as the *Mahometans* for those of *Medina* and *Mecca*. When these *Spaniards* are arrived at *Rome* they have no Viſuals but what they receive at the Gates of the Convents, which they soon swallow down, and then repair to the *Spanish* Square, where with great Gravity they walk up and down the rest of the Day, no less in Love with their own dear Persons than the greatest *Roman* Prince.

A *CASTILIAN* newly arrived, and who knew not the Hour of distributing the Soop, address'd himself



himself to a poor *French* Clergyman, who subsisted by Conventual Charity, his *Spanish* Vanity would not allow him to ask plainly for the House where the Soup was given, such a flat Question he thought very ignoble, and therefore racking his Brains for some out of the way Expression, he could think of none better than to ask the *Frenchman* if he had been already to take his Chocolate: *Austed tomado su Chocolate?* My Chocolate, reply'd the *Parisian*, how the Devil d'ye think I should pay for't, since I live by Charity, and am waiting till the Soup is given out at the *Franciscan* Convent? You have not been there yet? said the *Castilian*. No, answered the other, but now's the Time, and I'm going. I beg you will take me along with you, said the vain-glorious *Spaniard*, and there you shall see *Don Antonio Perez de Valcabro, de Redia, de Montalva, de Vega, &c.* give to Posterity a Mark of Humility. And who are all these Gentlemen? asked the *Frenchman*. My very self, answered the Don. If so, reply'd the other, rather say you'll give an Example to the present Age of a Man, as poor as *Job*, and as hungry as a Hawk.

FAREWEL, my dear *Monceca*, may thou be blest with Health and Contentment.

*Turin*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER XXXVIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

MY Philosophical Meditations are sometimes interrupted by the Study of History: I unbend my Mind by running over what has passed in the remotest Ages, and entertain myself with

great Men dead two or three thousand Years since; so that by reading their Discoveries and Actions, I fancy my self contemporary with them.

THE Confusion with which History is clouded till two or three hundred Years after the Deluge, is a great Loss, my dear *Isaac*, to those who bend their Minds to that Study: Few Authors have wrote of those distant Times, and we have only remaining some few Scrapes and Fragments, so different and ambiguous, that they only give Occasion to Disputes among the Learned, the more difficult to be clear'd up, because they rather propose their own Conjectures and Opinions, than give us true Explanations: To search for ancient History in such Writings, is to study the Opinions and imaginary Systems of the Moderns.

THE Actions of the first Race of Men, may be compared to a vast unknown Ocean, upon which one sails without Chart and Compass; neither *Genesis* nor the sacred Books left us by *Moses*, are sufficient to set us right: If they speak of the Creation of Man, of forming or re-establishing a People, 'tis still with relation to the *Jews*, omitting what does not directly tend to illustrate our Nation; though it is not to be doubted but that there were other People then existing, of which the Fragments left us of the History of the first *Egyptians*, *Ethiopians*, *Scythians*, and particularly the *Chinese*, are convincing Proofs; but our august Legislator's whole Study in his Writings, was to characterise our Nation, without troubling himself about Aliens.

If we remount higher, and draw near to the Time of the Deluge, we meet with a thousand insuperable Difficulties; 'tis impossible for us to discover the Source and Origin of considerable Nations and Empires, which we see at once start up: We read, that, two or three hundred Years  
after

after the Flood, *Egypt* was excessively populous, and that twenty thousand Cities could scarce contain its Inhabitants; *China*, *Scythia*, and *Tartary* were also flourishing States. How can it be conceived, that *Noab's* three Children, in two hundred Years, should have produced Numbers sufficient to people such vast Countries, and the Neighbourhood of the *Tigris* and *Euphrates*, the first that were inhabited?

I BELIEVE, my dear *Isaac*, that, to make a suitable Progress in our sacred History, the only one which Time has respected and preserved, we must simply give Attention to historical Truths, and leave all the vain Disputes to Philosophers and Doctors.

A NAZARENE Fryar \*, who enter'd into a strict Examination of these Facts, could, after all, find no better Means to demonstrate their Evidence, than by making Men with a Dash of his Pen; he made an exact Calculation of Children, Grand-Children, and Great Grand-Children, &c. that four Men might be supposed to produce in two hundred and fifty Years, and the Product was two hundred and sixty-eight thousand, seven hundred and nineteen Millions, that's to say, many more than were necessary to people five or six Worlds such as ours. His Adversaries were not at all pleased with his arithmetical Calculation; they could not be persuaded, that Men could be made in Reality, as on Paper, and therefore pronounced him a Novice in his new Profession; alledging further, " That, according to the Scriptures, Men were " pretty far advanced in Years before they had " Children, and but few thereafter; so that those " Swarms that dropp'd from a Pen, were impossible in Nature; adding, that the Multiplication of " the *Israelites*, during two hundred and fifty Years " in

\* Father Petau, a Jesuit.



“ in *Egypt*, from whence went out six hundred  
 “ thousand fighting Men, sprung originally from  
 “ Seventy settled in that Country with the Pa-  
 “ triarch *Jacob*, passed for a Miracle; and yet  
 “ this came far short of the pretended Multipli-  
 “ cation by four Persons in the Space of two  
 “ hundred and sixty Years.”

THESE insuperable Difficulties have thrown many into Error, who endeavoured to surmount them. “ They fancy’d that the Deluge was not  
 “ universal, and that God, in order to punish the  
 “ Sins of that ungrateful Race, which he had chose  
 “ preferably to others, did, for the Satisfaction  
 “ of his Justice, only drown the Country inhabit-  
 “ ed by them.” A celebrated modern Author\* establishes several Antediluvian Monarchies; many others have agreed with him in this Opinion, and supported it with Arguments of Natural and Experimental Philosophy. They pretend that, in the present Situation of the Earth, it’s impossible for a Deluge to rise fifteen Cubits above the Tops of the highest Mountains. “ The Sea, say they,  
 “ taken in general, is but about three hundred Pa-  
 “ ces in Depth: The highest Hills, as *Mount-Gor-*  
 “ *dian*, or *Ararat*, are but about three thousand  
 “ Paces above the Surface of the Sea, so that,  
 “ without reckoning on the extended spaciousness  
 “ of the Globe, in Proportion to its Elevation,  
 “ there must be twelve or fifteen Times as much  
 “ Water as Earth, in the Quantity reported in Hi-  
 “ story. †” Other Authors have maintained that it was impossible the Rains could fall in such Abundance, as to produce so strange an Effect, and found their Opinion on that of a famous Philosopher ‡, who proves, from exact Observations, that the most violent Storms of Rain produce but an Inch  
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\* Scaliger. † *Method for the Study of History*, by Abbot Langlet.  
 ‡ Father Merfenne.



and Half of Water, in the Space of half an Hour, which makes six Foot in a Day; and the Deluge having lasted only forty times twenty-four Hours, supposing the highest Mountains only to have an Elevation of two thousand Paces, which is one third less than their Height, not to surmount, but only to equal them, there must fall from the Sky, in twenty-four Hours, one hundred and twenty-five Foot of Water, instead of six that fall in the greatest Storms; which exceeds Possibility, and the Powers of Nature.

To what Purpose, my dear *Isaac*, are all these vain Disputes of the Learned, which amount to nothing? when 'tis asserted that the Deluge was not universal, and that God only design'd to punish an ungrateful People that had offended him: Is it not ridiculous to offer the pretended Designs of God as a Proof against his Word which he has left us in the sacred Books? The *Nazarene* Doctors believe the Certainty of *Moses's* Writings; to what Purpose then these frivolous Dissertations? since the History of these remote Times is a Chaos, 'tis absurd to imagine we can unravel it: 'Tis enough for us to be assured that *Noah's* three Children were the common Source of Mankind, and to search for the Beginning of the Monarchies form'd by their Descendants, is perplexing one's self to no Purpose: A Man of Sense must bound his Enquiry to those Times wherein he finds some Light and Certainty in the Historians who treat of them.

SUCH useless Perquisitions waste Time which might be better employ'd; and since it has not pleas'd the Almighty to transmit down to us the Means of re-peopling the World so speedily after the Flood, 'tis enough for us to know that he who created the Universe out of nothing, who so wisely supports and governs it, has met with no Difficulties in the Execution of his Designs. To

To study History to Advantage, original Authors must be consulted as much as possible: Who can be better acquainted with the Manners of a Country, than he who was born and bred in it, who writes in it, and to whom the Laws and Customs are familiar? What modern Author is vain enough to imagine that he knows the ancient *Greeks* as well as *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*, and *Plutarch*?

THE Historians who have but now wrote the Histories of their Countries, must be supposed to fall infinitely short of *Titus Livy*, and *Tacitus*, in Excellency, Majesty, and Grandeur of Writing; for how could they attain to the Justness of Characters of those Authors who copy'd after Nature?

I HAVE, generally speaking, but a very indifferent Opinion of Histories composed by modern Writers upon the Events of remote Times; I look upon them as Compilers, and their Works as bad Translations. Whoever would know the true Character of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, must search for it in the Originals. Would it not be ridiculous, if a *German*, curious to know the Manners, Customs, and Genius of the *French*, should rather chuse to frequent an *Englishman* (who had been at *Paris*) for Information, than to live among them when he might do it? Such a Conduct would, no doubt, be thought extraordinary! 'Tis no less so to expect to know the Manners of the ancient *Romans* from a Man born at *Paris*, and to believe that he is better instructed in them than *Salust*, or *Titus Livy*.

TWO Nazarene Friars\* have lately made a compleat Collection of the *Roman History* †, so  
volu-

\* The FF. Catrou & Rouill, Jesuits.

† I can't conceive how such a Work could ever meet with Approbation; I know that there are more Fools than Men of Sense, but really a Man must be profoundly silly to throw away so much Time as is necessary to read that Book.

voluminous and extensive, that whoever should have Patience enough to read it, must be obliged to abandon the Originals: Instead of the lively and masculine Stile, which History requires, one would think that they were the adopted Heirs of *Calprenede* and *Scuderi*, in the Romantick; they yield not an Ace in Prolixity, and if they don't give us Descriptions of Festoons and Astragals\*, they descend to the most pitiful Speeches of the meanest Writers among the Ancients. These Friars have not considered that in a Work so immense as their's, they ought to have been very reserved in that Part of it, and not to oppress the Reader with continual Declamations of Rhetorick, with which their History is cramm'd. The Readers sink under the Weight of trifling Facts, ill digested, and confusedly heap'd together; it presents nothing to the Mind that is clear, concise, or shining: In short, 'tis so bad a Copy, and such a wretched Imitation of the Ancients, that should one imagine there was the least Resemblance betwixt it and the Originals, it were enough to make him for ever shut his Eyes on them; what induced those two Authors to join their Talents for such a pitiful Performance I know not: To speak sincerely, I think one of them might have accomplish'd such a Collection; only while one work'd upon the Body of the History, the other was busy on the Notes; worse, if worse can be, than the Text.

A NAZARENE Doctor† has made another Collection of the *Roman* History, not near so prolix, and consequently better. When a Writer has formed

\* *Ce ne sont que Festons, ce ne sont qu'Astragales.* — Boileau.

*Festoon*, a Garland or Border of Fruits and Flowers, especially engraven or embossed Works.

*Astragal*, an Ornament round like a Ring, join'd to Bases, Cornices, &c.

† *L'abbé de Vertot.*

formed his Taste in the original Authors, and learned from them the Genius, Character, and Manners of the true *Romans*, the reading of such a modern Author is very necessary and useful, because of the regular Disposition of many Facts elsewhere dispersed, and that he can at once find what he was before obliged to seek in many Books: But Works of this Kind are only useful to two Sorts of People, such who, already thoroughly vers'd in History, have occasion for a Collection to ease them of the Fatigue of perpetually poring in Originals, for what they have already seen; and such who, only desirous to read for Diversion, and to have a superficial Notion of past Times, don't care to bear the Drudgery of searching into and making a Collection of Facts and Events, which are in one Author, and not to be found in another.

IF one is resolved to dive into History, so as to acquire a perfect Knowledge of it, 'tis dangerous to begin with modern Books, in which 'tis not a *Roman* who instructs us in the Manners of his Country, but a *Frenchman* attempting to acquaint us with the Character of a *Brutus*, a *Cæsar*, or a *Scipio*; and whatever Genius he may have, 'tis impossible that ancient History passing thro' his Hands should escape the being tinged with a modern Taste, which must disfigure it.

THE Post is just going off, so that I'm forced to end my Letter. Some other Time I shall write thee my Thoughts fully on this Subject; meantime I bid thee a hearty Farewel, and pray that the God of our Fathers may bless thee with Prosperity.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*

LETTER





## LETTER XXXIX.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

WE now see in *France* what was never seen before in it, *viz.* the Women excluded from any Share in the Ministry, and the Secret of State Affairs impenetrable. The Sovereign and his Minister are equally reserv'd, and their Designs a Mystery to the Publick. This judicious Conduct is an Effect of the Minister's Prudence, and the early Discretion of the Prince, who, in an Age in which the Heart is ordinarily the Play-thing of Passions, lives in the Midst of his splendid Court, with the greatest Circumspection. The *French* are astonished to see a Form of Government to which they were hitherto intirely Strangers; they know by Experience that the Fair Sex have often had a larger Share in great Affairs than the Ministers themselves, and are not ignorant that the State has suffer'd by it.

WERE I a King, I would make choice of Persons, for my Assistants in the Government, arriv'd at an Age in which Reason has an absolute Sway over the Passions, and I could wish them to be unmarried Men. What can't a Woman of Sense do with a fond Husband, in certain Moments, and certain Situations? The greatest Ministers were never marry'd, and 'tis very probable they never had rose to such a high Station, had they been constantly haunted by a domestick Spy, against whose Curiosity it would have been impossible for them still to have been on their Guard.

IF we compare the Cardinals *Richlieu*, *Ximenes*, *Mazarine*, and, to go farther backwards, the Ab-

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bot *Suger*, with other Ministers, what a vast Difference must we perceive? but to put this Matter in a clearer Light, I could instance many Examples of our own Time. It can't be deny'd but that the Cardinals *Alberoni* and *Cienfuegos* deserved the highest Praises for their Skill in managing publick Affairs; not that I pretend to maintain but there are Persons, who, notwithstanding their Attachment to the Fair Sex, can get the better of all their Cunning; but the Effort is difficult, and when a Man has the Management of publick Affairs, 'tis not an easy Matter to be so much upon his Guard, as to prevent a clever Woman, who has a Place in his Heart, from discovering, sooner or later, a Part of his Secret.

THE late Duke Regent had the Art of gaining an Ascendant over his Foible, tho' ten times a Day the humble Slave of different *Belles*, yet Love usurp'd not over his Politicks, and, in the Height of Joy, Pleasures, and Transport, the Statesman was separated from the Lover. But where, my dear *Isaac*, can we meet with such grand and steady Genius's as that of this Prince? tho' Calumny, Imposture, Rebellion, and Monkish Hypocrisy, under the Veil of Religion and Justice, combine together to cast their fatal Venom upon his most innocent Actions, yet, as the Wind dispels the Clouds, he defeated their pernicious Plots, and, in the Punishment inflicted upon his Enemies, his Intrepidity and Grandeur of Soul were the more fully display'd.

How few such Characters are to be found? History scarce affords one in many Ages; on the contrary, it has been always found, that Women gave the decisive Stroke to great Affairs. What Springs did not the Princess *Eboli* set a going in the Reign of *Philip II.* notwithstanding that Prince's Prudence and Policy? Did not the Ladies force

*Henry*

*Henry IV.* to put an End to a War, successful in its Beginning; and, by their Artifice and secret Machinations, did they not persuade him to undertake another, of which the Event was doubtful, and the Preparations partly the Cause of his Death? *Madame de Chevruesse* set a hundred different Machines at Work, both at Home and Abroad, which put the Kingdom into a strange Ferment, and however turbulent the *Cardinal de Rets* was, he did not half so much Harm. The Factions of *Westminster* were animated by the Countess of *Carlisle*: That Lady, in her Closet at *Whitehall*, gave Soul and Life to them.

ALL our Precautions against the bewitching Charms of the Fair Sex are vain; it signifies nothing to call them ambitious, indiscreet, partial, and capricious; notwithstanding all these failings with which they are reproach'd, the Ladies have been at all Times, and in all Courts, the principal Springs of grand Events: "Therefore, says an excellent Author\*, the wise Courtier is careful not to make any of them his Enemy, nor to speak against them in general: Woe be to those who look upon them as a frail weak Sex." There is no Enemy so dangerous as a Woman, she who thinks her own Power or Credit insufficient to crush an Enemy, is cunning enough to unite herself with some other. The most artful Minister in the Management of his Master's Interest, is but a Novice, compared to a Woman provok'd and thirsting for Revenge. As the Ladies look upon pardoning and forgetting Injuries to be imaginary Virtues, 'tis no easy Matter to pacify them when they think themselves affronted.

WHEN a Woman is personally concern'd in a State Affair, or in a Conspiracy, Nature, by a surprizing Effort, seems to change her very Being:

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There's no penetrating into her Designs, being as reserv'd, in what regards herself, as she is unguarded, with respect to others. To be convinced of this Truth we have only to examine the principal Events of late Reigns. The League could not fix on a proper Scheme for the Affination of *Henry III.* till *Madame de Monpensier*, Sister to the *Guises*, was let into the Plot; she artfully brought a Monk into her Measures, and persuaded him that Religion called on him to commit the most enormous of Crimes. The pernicious Designs of the *Spaniards* against *Henry IV.* would never have succeeded, had they only been supported by the old Duke d' *Epernon*; but when the Dutcheis *de Verneuil*, that Monarch's discarded Mistress, conspired against him, he unhappily fell a Sacrifice to her.

THE Changes and Commotions of the *Ottoman* Empire are mostly owing to the Power and Credit of the Women: Who would imagine that a Sultaneis, shut up in her Seraglio, and debarred from the Sight of all whom a barbarous Operation has not struck out of the Class of Men, should govern *Turky*, name the Vizir and the Musti, espouse the Interests of the Bashaw of *Cairo*, or of *Babylon*, whom she never knew, and that the Motions and Passions with which she is agitated, in the solitary Apartments of her Palace, should circulate thro' the whole Empire, and produce the Effects that she designs?

THE Character of Mistress is much more dangerous, than that of Wife, to obtain an absolute Power over Mens Hearts: We often have a Pleasure in granting to a Mistress, what we ought to deny to a Wife. Love admits of no Rules, and disdains Restraint, so that this Passion is much more dangerous to Men in publick Business than Marriage; they may indeed make a vain Struggle for a while, and resist the first Attacks, but sooner or latter they



they are sure to yield. A Man really amorous and capable of Reserve, is a Prodigy that has not been known these three thousand Years: Nothing is too hard for a lovely Woman, who studies how to please; she pursues a Design to better Purpose, and more securely than our Sex, who, notwithstanding their pretended Capacity and Mettle, give daily into the most obvious Snares.

IF we reflect on the great Men who have withstood the Impressions which their Mistresses endeavoured to give them, we shall find they were less amorous than vicious. When one is a general Lover, and when the Heart is not fix'd to a particular Object, the Passions are not so violent, nor so dangerous; his Case is much the same with the Duke Regent's, whose Character I have but just now given thee. Changeableness and Inconstancy guard the Politician from the Indiscretions and Weaknesses of the sincere Lover; thus *Alexander* and *Julius Caesar* had their Foibles, but they did not prove their Ruin; Change of Objects prevented their becoming Slaves, and secured them from the Misfortune into which *Anthony's* settled Passion for *Cleopatra*, plunged that great Man.

A THOUSAND Examples might be found in our own Age, to justify this Opinion; and, without going back to ancient History, we may venture to affirm, that, for two hundred Years, the Women have had a greater Share than the Men in the Government of *Europe*; and should I be tempted to add, that all this Time they shared their Credit with the Priests and Friars, this Assertion would be no less true than the former.

I THINK it's a reasonable Opinion, my dear *Isaac*, that a King ought not to chuse for Ministers but Persons in whom Age has cool'd the Passions; if he can't find such in the State of Celibacy, he ought at least to take care that they be not expo-

sed, at the same Time, to the Ascendant of a Wife and Allurements of a Mistress, otherwise the Secrets with which he is trusted, are in Danger of a Discovery. Were I a King, I would use the same Method in the Choice of Ministers, as the College of Cardinals in the Nomination of Sovereign Pontives. The Excesses and Debaucheries of some who were elected when young, have made the *Nazarenes* see the Necessity of having Recourse to the only infalliable Fence against the Passions of the Heart, and to raise none to the Government of the Church but Persons whom Age has cured of youthful Follies.

IN a well govern'd State, the Maxim is, *Old Ministers, and young Generals*. When I say young, I mean Years of Maturity when the Mind and Body are in full Vigour: The Minister must plod in his Closet, and the General execute in the Field; to the former belongs a consummate Prudence, not to be influenc'd by that Heat and Valour, the shining Parts of the military Man's Character; too much Ardour, and Love of Glory, may be hurtful to a State: At an Age when Experience is wanting, private Interest is often confounded with the publick, and a Man's own Heart deceives him. The great Prince of *Condè*, at twenty Years of Age, was a famous General; but would have made a very indifferent Minister: Cardinal *Mazarine* reduced him twenty Times to the greatest Straits, and at last forc'd him to knock under. *Alexander*, Master of *Asia* at twenty-eight Years of Age, would have remain'd plain King of *Macedon*, had not his Father *Philip* done by his Politicks in *Greece*, what he did by his Arms in *Persia*.

I LOOK upon a Minister as a Man whose least Passions may run him into the greatest Faults; and as it is impossible to be a Man and not subject to Humanity, an advanc'd Age, that divests

us of a Part of our Prejudices, Passions, and violent Impulses, renders us Proof against certain Foibles, and better qualified for the Management of publick Affairs.

It may be objected that this Prudence, and this Wisdom, which I require in a Minister, are equally necessary to complete the Character of a good General: Consequently the one as well as the other should be of an advanced Age; but 'tis easy to perceive, that the Experience which the former ought to have, is very different from that which the latter ought to acquire: To know the Hearts of Men, the different Interests of States, the Laws of a Kingdom, the Méans to make Trade flourish, to acquire the Esteem of foreign Nations, to be lov'd by his Prince's Allies, and dreaded by his Enemies, are Talents very different from those that relate to the forming of a Camp, the regulating the March of an Army, the drawing of it up in Battalia, the leading it on to Battle, and obtaining a Victory: A General must have Judgment, Valour, and Activity; and a Minister must be a profound Politician, always watchful to observe the minutest Transactions, and, by his Equity, to preserve the Honour of his Prince, without lessening his Credit and Authority: The Fatigues of the Minister are confined to his Closet; but the General's Work requires a healthful Constitution, that can undergo all Sort of Hardships. Every Age produces twenty Generals, and scarce one Minister.

Adieu, my dear *Isaac*; be joyful and content.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



LETTER



## LETTER XL.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

A MAN was yesterday taken up here, and conducted to the publick Prisons, to whom ancient *Greece* would have erected Statues; he was a sturdy Beggar, in Comparison of whom *Dio-genes* was but a School-Boy; he ask'd Charity in a most insolent Manner, and gave abusive Language to those whose Physnomies did not please him: For some Time People put up with his Impertinencies, but having had the Impudence to rush into a Farmer General's House, and seat himself at his Table in his greasy tatter'd Rags; the Master, surpriz'd at the Fellow's Brags, order'd his Servants to thrust him out of Doors; upon which the modern Cynick read him so provoking a Lecture on his own, and Colleagues Practices, that the Financer sent the Philosopher to Jail; mean time 'tis confidently reported that he's a very ingenious Man, and that this mad Way of Life to which he has taken himself, is the Effect of Philosophy, and to ridicule the vain Pomp of the World: 'Tis a Misfortune for him not to have been born two thousand Years ago; the same Impertinencies that have brought him to a Dungeon, would have proved a Means to immortalize him.

IF the seven wise Men of *Greece* were now living, some of them would be look'd upon as Persons of Genius, and allow'd, for a Livelihood, to dedicate their Books to the Gentlemen of the Revenue, and the rest would starve, or get a *Bed-*

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*I am* for their Lodging. I am, at least, very well assured that the Beggar now confin'd at *Paris*, has not committed the fourth Part of the Extravagancies that *Diogenes* acted at *Athens*. How could People, so wise and judicious as the *Grecians*, consecrate, by the Name of Wisdom, the infamous Actions of that Cynick? I allow him to go thro' the Streets with a lighted Candle, seeking for a Man at Noon-Day, but I can't bear his scandalizing Humanity by his wicked Excesses, and that he should glory in it \*. The greatest Part of the Philosophers have been addicted to Vanity, and the principal Motive of their most remarkable Actions was to acquire the Reputation of extraordinary Men. When I consider *Diogenes* passing his Life in a Tub, I look upon him as a perpetual Martyr to his Vanity; and on his pretended Mortification and Austerity, as the Consequences of his Pride. *Plato*, whose real Merit wanted no such Mummeries to set it off, walking with some Friends by a River's Side, one of them made him observe *Diogenes* in Water to the Chin in the Dead of Winter, and the River cover'd with Ice, except the Hole that he had made for himself. "Don't look at him, said *Plato* to his Friend, but turn your Eyes another Way, and he'll soon get out of the Water, for he only went into it, because he saw us coming." The Contempt that *Plato* put upon *Diogenes*'s Follies, drew upon him the Hatred of that Cynick; accordingly he came one Day to his House, and walking very disdainfully on the rich Carpets that cover'd the Floor of his Hall, "See, says he, how I tread under Foot *Plato*'s Pride: Yes, answer'd *Plato*, but in doing this your Pride is greater." IN

\* Πάντ' ἀρὰ Διογένης ἐφυγενταδε τὸν δ' ὑμνῶν  
ἡκεῖν παλάμη λαίῃς ἔκατεων.

*Omnia sanè Diogenes effugit hac, Nuptiâs vero, perfecit dextrâ;*  
*laide nihil opus habens.* Antholog. Epigram. LXXX. Lib. VII.

IN all Ages Vanity seems to have been the darling Vice of great Men: They who have wrote against Glory, Ambition, and a Desire of being immortaliz'd, have prefix'd their Names to their Books with that very View: The Philosophers are not the only People subjected to this Passion; it is generally stamp'd and engrav'd on the Hearts of all Men who have Genius to raise themselves above the Vulgar: The Love of Glory and Praise has more contributed to make Conquerors than a Desire to enlarge their Dominions. *Alexander* gave away Kingdoms, after he had conquer'd them, and reserved no other Recompence for his Labours, than the Glory of having surmounted them. A noble Ambition is useful to Society; without it, Arts would languish, and Sciences remain uncultivated: The Desire of Immortality, and the Satisfaction arising from being extoll'd, set more Springs in Motion than Gold or Money.

IN Countries where the People are not animated by a Desire of Glory, we find a Decay in the liberal Arts, which extends even to the meanest Professions. We are told, that when one wants his Measure to be taken in *Spain* for a Pair of Shoes, the Shoe-maker asks his Wife how her Purse holds out; if she can muster up but two or three Crowns, he saucily bids his Customer go about his Business, and continues scraping upon his Guitar; not that the *Spaniards* are not fond of Glory; Vanity is the chief Attribute of their Character, but 'tis a ridiculous Glory, favouring more of Pride and Arrogance, than a Desire of immortalizing their Name.

WHEN the Passion of being transmitted to Posterity is not supported by Honour and Virtue, it may throw us into terrible Mistakes: *Erostratus* burnt the Temple of *Ephesus* to render his Name immortal; and 'tis assured that this was one of  
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the Reasons which determin'd *Nero* to set Fire to the four Corners of *Rome*. The Emperor *Charles V.* had like to have fallen a Victim to the wild Frenzy of an Idolizer of Immortality: This Prince, when at *Rome*, went up to the Top of *St. Peter's* Dome, and when he was looking down to the Bottom of the Church, one of his Courtiers, who stood by him, was strongly tempted to throw himself down head-long, and to pull the Emperor after him, which he thought a sure Way to eternalize his Memory: Happily for *Charles V.* he did not execute his Project; but when he was come down, had the Indiscretion to tell him how far he had been tempted: The Prince thank'd him heartily for not causing him to take such a dangerous Leap, but forbad him ever coming again into his Presence.

AN immoderate Desire of Glory sometimes reaches to People of the lowest Class: A Goatherd of a Village near *Nismes*, in *Languedoc*, having no Temple of *Ephesus* to burn, and being loth to destroy any of the *Nazarene* Churches, bethought himself, like another *Erostratus*, of a very whimsical Stratagem to transfix his Memory to After-ages in his own Country; when the Vines were in Blossom, he led a Flock of two hundred Goats into the Vineyards, began the Vintage three or four Months before-hand, and by that Means depriv'd the whole Country of Wine for that Year: When he was apprehended, and ask'd what had tempted him to commit such an Action, he very gravely answer'd, that he could think of no better Expedient to make him be talk'd of after Death. The Judges, dreading the Consequences of a Thirst for Glory so pernicious to the Country, order'd him to be confin'd in a Mad-House, where he died.

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I NOW return to the ancient Philosophers. If the Actions committed by some of them were not so hurtful to Society as those just now mention'd, they were no less extravagant: What must a Man of Sense think of one who, after many Years Study, causes his Eyes to be put out, that he may meditate with the more Freedom \*? What Judgment can he form of a pretended Philosopher, who threw himself into *Euripus* †, because he could not account for its Ebbing and Flowing? What Notion, in short, can he have of the Wisdom of the Learned, from the immoderate Laughter of *Democritus*, and the continual Tears of *Heraclitus* ‡? who was so complaisant as to afflict himself for the whole World, and would have extended his weeping Charity to the *Antipodes*, if he had known any thing about them.

SOCRATES, *Plato*, and *Epicurus*, were, in my Opinion, the wisest Philosophers of Antiquity: I have little to say as to the Truth of their Opinions, but only that the Regularity of their Behaviour answer'd to the Wisdom, Discretion, and Candour display'd in their Writings §: Reason directed

\* *Scriptum est, Democritum, luminibus oculorum suâ sponte se privasse, quia estimaret cogitationes commentationesque animi sui in contemplandis natura rationibus vegetiores & exactiores fore, si eas videndi illecebris, & oculorum impedimentis liberasset.* — Aul. Gellius, noct. Atticar. Lib. X. Chap. XVII.

† *Euripus*, a narrow Sea in Greece, which ebbs and flows seven Times in twenty-four Hours. See what is said about *Aristotle's Death* in the Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters. — Letter V.

‡ *La Mothe le Vayer* has endeavour'd to justify the perpetual Laughter of *Democritus*, and the Tears of *Heraclitus*, but has not succeeded in his Undertaking. See his Treatise on the Virtue of the Pagans, Tom. I. Pag. 620 and following, of the Folio Edition; and the Secret Memoirs of the Republick of Letters. — Letter V.

§ By the Writings of *Socrates*, must be understood the memorable Things of *Socrates*; a Work of which *Xenophon* is the Author,



rected these great Men, and they quitted the World not out of Hatred to Mankind, but to avoid the Troubles and Confusions of it. In the Solitudes to which they retir'd for the Freedom of Contemplation, they did not deny themselves those innocent Pleasures which good Men enjoy in publick Life, but only set Bounds to prevent their running into Excess. I could almost find in my Heart to place *Epicetus* next in Rank, but that his Severity seems to me to be over-strain'd, and a Consequence of his Vanity; there's something peevish and sour in all his moral Precepts, and in the Philosopher we can easily perceive the ill Humour of *Epaphroditus's* Slave.

I LOOK upon Resolution under Misfortunes to be a Virtue worthy of Admiration, but am not for its being extended to Barbarity and Ferocity: I consider the Stoicks as melancholy Mad-men, with whom Wisdom is a barbarous Virtue, more hurtful than beneficial to Mankind: I'm for a mild Philosophy, adapted to the good of Society, and which, in exposing Vice, does not represent the Path of Virtue as impracticable: Let me have Morality that imposes no insupportable Yoke, and which, by curbing our Passions, may serve as a Barrier against the Excesses to which our Constitution and Inclinations hurry us. I esteem a Philosopher to whom Vice is hateful, but I expect that he should have Compassion for the Vicious, that he should cure their Defects with Discourses full of good Nature, good Sense, and Truth, carefully avoiding all pedantick Affectation.

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Author, or rather the Copyist, since it only contains the principal Discourses pronounced by *Socrates* in his Life-time. We have nothing left us of *Epicurus*, but some Fragments preserved in the Writings of several Authors; and of all the Books which that Philosopher composed, not so much as one is now extant.

THE true *Epicureans* (I mean those who had not corrupted their Master's System of Morality) were Men of preferable Sense to the Stoicks: I take the latter to be Fools, whose heated Imagination had form'd a wild and extravagant Notion of the sovereign Good, not to be conceiv'd. How ridiculous! how vain must that Man be, who, for the sake of adhering to a Sect, look'd upon himself as a God? He appropriated to himself the august Name of Wise; and the wise Man, according to him, was ever in the full Enjoyment of all that's good and virtuous\*; free while a Slave, handsome while deform'd, rich while poor, and easy under Torments; he was more a Deity than a Man. Is it possible that the distracted Mind of Man can have such Influence on the Imagination, as to persuade a Person, who suffers acute Pains, that he is truly happy? Nothing but Vanity is at the Bottom of such an unreasonable Notion; and whatever Sedateness *Epictetus* affected while his Master, out of Spite, was breaking his Leg, his Moderation was the Effect of Pride.

THERE's but one Thing capable to make us support Torments with a Sort of Pleasure, and that is, the Expectation of a greater Good than the present Evil: Thus, in the different Religions, those who have been exposed to Racks, and the most exquisite Tortures, have blest'd the Pains that were

\* 'Tis very true, that a Man really wise and virtuous, is more happy and undisturb'd than a Criminal, let his Station be ever so high, because in the Midst of Grandeurs he is devour'd by Passions and Remorses. Had the Stoicks said but this, they had spoke rationally, but they carried Things to an Extremity: and *Cicero*, who was not averse to this Sentiment, owns however that the Stoicks made Wisdom to be so pure and sublime a Quality that none could ever attain to it.

*Negunt enim (loquitur de Stoicis) quem quam virum bonum esse, nisi sapientem. Sit ita sanè, sed eam sapientiam interpretantur, quam ad huc Mortalis nemo est consecutus. Cicero de Amicitia. Cap. V.*

were to procure them everlasting Pleasures; they would not, by abjuring their Faith, put an End to transitory Sufferings, which were to be requited by perpetual Rewards; but the Stoicks had no other Consolation in theirs, than the Vanity of supporting them without complaining.

FAREWELL, my dear *Isaac*; let me hear from thee now and then; methinks 'tis a long while since I had any of thy Letters.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XLI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I WAS yesterday at the *Italian* Comedy, and am much pleas'd with the Performance of the Actors: As a Play is the Picture of human Life, so the Comedian pleases more or less as he's exact in copying his Original: Let a Piece be ever so good, it languishes under the Representation of bad Actors; whereas a Performance that won't bear a Reading, will often gain Applause by the artful Management of skilful Players: This is the Case with most of the Pieces represented on the *Italian* Theatre; they are more airy and lively than solid, and what is but heavy and dull in reading, becomes brisk and diverting on the Stage. Some Authors have invented a new kind of Comedy, joining Morality to the Buffooneries of Harlequin \*. The *Italian* Stage, under the Conduct of

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\* Which may be seen with Pleasure in the Pieces intitled, *La double Inconstance*. i. e. The double Inconstancy. *La Sur-*  
*prise*

these new Authors, might have been improved so as to rival the *Latin* and the *French*: But some wretched Writers \*, who succeeded to the former, have reduced it to its primitive State: In most of their Pieces, the regular Conduct, the Uniformity of Characters, and the discreet Behaviour, are sacrificed to the Pleasure of making the Pit laugh with some trifling Jest, or whimsical Incident, very remote from Probability.

THE *Italian* Comedy has had strange Ups and Downs at *Paris*; in the former Reign they were banish'd out of *France*; the Boldness with which they publicly expos'd the Characters of Persons of the highest Rank, was the Cause of their Disgrace. Some Years thereafter, the Duke Regent re-call'd them from Exile, and order'd their Re-establishment at *Paris*. The Punishment which the former Comedians had undergone, render'd the new ones more circumspect, by leaving out what might touch particular Persons, and restricting themselves to what might be agreeable and entertaining to the Publick. They had, in the *French* Comedians, dangerous Rivals, whose real Merit ought to have eclips'd the faint Lustre of their Stage, but that they lessen'd the Defects by their excellent Manner of acting.

THE *Greek* Comedies and Tragedies are rivall'd by the *French*; if the modern Pieces are not superior to the ancient, yet every learn'd Man, who is not influenc'd by Prejudice, must confess their Equality; and I should be even tempted to grant them the Preference in many Cases.

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\* *Romagnesi, Lelio the Son, and others.*



No Comedy-writer among the *Latines* was ever possessed of so many Talents as *Moliere*. *Terence* wrote in a pure Stile, his Pictures come up to Nature, and his Representations are so lively, that they strike as if we really saw what flows from his Pen; an admirable Conduct is display'd in his Pieces, but his Failing consisted in Want of Fire, Strength of Fancy, and Variety in his Characters: If five, of the six Pieces which he has published, were lost, we should still have *Terence* intire. In all his Comedies 'tis a cunning Rogue of a Valet, an amorous or debauch'd young Gentleman, or a covetous Father, &c. When we have read his *Andrien* the Heart finds no new Instruction, in his other Pieces, the Mind is only diverted with the Fiction.

PLAUTUS, ingenious, diversify'd, and full of Variety in his Characters, fail'd in Stile; and sometimes, in his very best Pieces, degraded into low Wit, extremely offensive to good Taste.

BUT where find we more Variety, more Excellence, more Justness in Pictures, more Neatness, and Precision of Stile, than in *Molliere's Misanthrope*\*, *Les Femmes Savantes*†, *Le Tartufe*‡, *Les Facheux*§, *L'ecole des Femmes*\*\*? I would place his good Pieces above the best of the *Greek* Performances, and the bad, which he made to please the Mob, below the *Italian* Farces, being equally defectuous, and less gay.

THE *French* have carried Tragedy to a still greater Perfection. The *Romans* never had any thing in that Kind which deserved the Attention of Judges: *Seneca's* Tragedies are the Productions of an Orator, rather than the Works of a Tragedian.

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dian, he neither raises the Soul with the Sublime, nor affects the Heart with the Soft and Tender; none of his Passages are moving, nor capable of inspiring Terror, Fear, or Pity.

THE Romans highly esteem'd *Varius's Thiestus*, and *Ovid's Medea*, but Time has robb'd us of those two Pieces, and, no Doubt, of many Beauties which they contain'd. None knew the Motions of the Heart better than *Ovid*, and none could better express the Sentiments flowing from a violent Passion; his *Heroides* bring unquestionable Proofs of his Skill in Tragedy, but there's no judging of the Goodness of a Work that exists, by putting it in the Scale with an other, of which we have no certain Knowledge.

SOPHOCLES and *Eurypides* rais'd the *Grecian* Theatre to the highest Perfection, as *Corneille* and *Racine* did the *French*; and to determine where the Preference amongst these Authors stood, I believe it would be necessary to judge of the *Athenian* and *Parisian* Taste: Few *Frenchmen*, now-a-days, will allow of a Superiority in the *Greek* Stage over theirs; and tho' this Sentiment be not so universal in other Nations, yet it has its Sticklers.

I TAKE upon me to maintain that there's more Grandeur, Majesty, and Excellency, in *Corneille*, than in *Sophocles*, tho' this last was endowed with a sublime Genius, which deserved the Admiration of all Men of Judgment, yet he was defective in the Variety of Characters, as well as in the Justness of his Pictures.

RACINE often join'd to the Grand and Sublime of *Sophocles* and *Corneille*, the Tender and Pathetick of *Eurypides*, and if he had any Fault, it was too much Regularity and Exactness; for some trivial Defects would have set off certain shining Passages which are less conspicuous, being

constantly



constantly furrounded with many beautiful Expressions.

Two Poets in our own Days are Successors to the Fame of those great Men, and if they have not altogether equall'd them, we must at least allow that they have perfectly imitated them, and in their Imitation are become Originals. The one\* alternately moves the Mind and Heart by Love, Pity, and Terror; and the other†, an excellent Versifier, of a daring Genius, and penetrating Wit, has pay'd out a new Road for himself; some favourable Circumstances made him attempt embellishing the Stage, by a Method which might indeed be look'd upon as new and extraordinary; such is the Tragedy just now publish'd by him in three Acts, in which no Woman appears, and consequently Love has no Share in the Piece. The Exclusion of this Passion, which, whatever some Criticks may pretend, is the Soul of the Theatre, and the surest Means of reaching the Heart, has laid the Author under a Necessity of reducing his Play to three Acts, being very sensible that all the Policy and Grandeur of the *Romans* could not carry him to a Fifth, without falling into dry Declamation, which must render the Representation dull and heavy. There's not a modern Piece where Love has not its Part, consequently a Woman must assist in the Conduct of the Plot to its End, to prevent the Author's falling into cold Narrations, and Episods. As for the ancient Tragedies, in which Number may be rank'd *Racine's Athalia* and *Esther*, the Interludes make amends for the Brevity of the Acts; and if some Plays of *Eurypides* and *Sophocles* were acted without such separate Entertainments, the Rehearsal would be over in half an Hour at most, therefore Interludes of  
instrumental

\* Crebillon. † Voltaire

instrumental and vocal Musick dispens'd with the Extensiveness required in modern Tragedies.

THIS new Piece, which I mentioned, is intitled, *The Death of Julius Cæsar*. The Character of that Emperor agrees with the Idea which Antiquity has transmitted down to us: He's ambitious, eloquent, intrepid, a true Friend, and generous. The Author, in five Lines, gives us a most exact Picture of him, the more artful and ingenious in contriving it so, that *Cæsar* himself (speaking to *Anthony*, who press'd him to punish some Senators suspected of conspiring against him) holds the Pencil in his own Hand.

*Je les Aurois punis, si je les pouvois craindre :  
Ne me conseille point de me faire hair.*

*Je sçai combattre, vaincre, & ne sçai point punir.  
Allons : &, n'ecoutant, ni Soupçons, ni Vengeance,  
Sur L'univers soumis regnons sans Violence.*

Thus paraphras'd :

To punish *Argues* Cowardice and Dread,  
Let neither enter into *Cæsar's* Head :  
To fight, to conquer, is the Hero's Part,  
But still 'tis greater to attract the Heart :  
Come, let our Doubts and Fears be drove away,  
And let us rule the World with gentle Sway.

THIS Picture is the more beautiful, and gives the more Pleasure, as it seems natural, and drawn from the Original ; since it's *Cæsar*, who, painting himself, displays his most secret Sentiments to his Confident. Such Situations are the happy Effects of a delicate Fancy, for a Picture that traces the Action to its End, has a far better Effect, than a cold Description of a Man's Virtues or Vices in the Mouth of another.

YET, it must be own'd that *Racine* has succeeded in the Description which the Vizir *Acomat* gives of the Sultan *Ibrahim* ; the Brevity, Justness, and

and the Situation of the Describer, have rendered this a most compleat Passage.

*L'imbecille Ibrahim sans craindre sa naissance,  
 Trainee exempt de peril une eternelle Enfance.  
 Indigne egalement de vivre, & de mourir,  
 On l'abandonne aux Mains qui daignent le nourrir\*.*

Thus paraphras'd:

From Danger free, in childish Sport and Play,  
 The weak *Ibrahim* trifles Time away;  
 Unfit for Life, and more unfit to die,  
 On Nurse's Bosom let the Fondling lie.

I'D rather been the Author of these four Lines, than of all *Seneca's* Tragedies; I scarce think it's possible to equal the Exactness and Justness in this Description of the Tranquility of the Sultan's Brother in the Seraglio; but every body is not so happy as *Racine*, and therefore I still am of the Opinion, that in Tragedy, care should be taken to make the Persons whom we introduce draw their own Pictures; the Characters are more shining, and make a stronger Impression upon our Imagination; but when this is not possible, we must endeavour that our Descriptions be succinct, and have nothing of the Declamatory in them.

*BRUTUS, Cassius, Cimbrinus*, and the other Senators, who conspired against *Cæsar*, are painted with too much Uniformity in the Scene where they speak to *Julius Cæsar*. Methinks I see a Company of Deputies from the Country Villages harranguing the Governor of a Province on the Impossibility of paying the Land-Tax, and every one of them putting in a Word in his Turn, all which Lands in this: "We have no Money," and therefore the *Roman* Senators will have no King.

THE

\* *Racine's Bajazet*, Scene I.

THE Character of *Anthony* is extremely beautiful; he is such as he ought to be, a zealous Friend of *Cæsar's*, an Enemy to Liberty, and below him to serve under any but so great a Master. See how he paints himself in the following Lines, speaking to *Cæsar*.

*Antoine, tu le sçais, ne connoit point l'envie,  
J'ai cheri, plus qu'à toi, la Glorie de ta vie.  
J'ai préparé la chaîne ou tu mets les Romains,  
Content d'être sous toi le plus grand des humains;  
Plus fier de t'attacher ce nouveau Diadème,  
Plus grand de te servir, que de régner moi-même.*

Thus paraphras'd:

*Anthony*, thou know'st, courts no other Fame,  
But high to raise his Master's mighty Name;  
My Country I of Liberty bereave,  
And hug the Chains that make it *Cæsar's* Slave.  
Let me, ye Powers, ere I am dead and gone, }  
But see the Hero seated on a Throne, }  
'Then, then, I'm blest, and all my Work is done. }

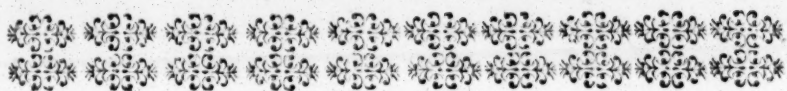
THE last Scene of this Piece is noble and magnificent: The sublime Thoughts, and the lofty Expressions, are the more becoming, in that *Anthony*, tho' he's supposed to be under extreme Grief, is harranguing the People against *Cæsar's* Murderers, and therefore these studied Expressions, indecent in a Man oppress'd with Grief, and condemn'd in *Theramenes's* Speech, are in the present Case very allowable, and produce a good Effect upon the Hearts of the Spectators.

FAREWELL, my dear *Isaac*, may Heaven grant thee Riches in abundance.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**

LETTER





## LETTER XLII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I WAS Yesterday conducted by a Friend to a Convent of *Nazarene* Monks, where I pass'd a Part of the Day, and carefully examined their Conduct and Monastick Life. I asked the Father, in whose Cell we were, how he diverted himself in his Retirement? I put up fervent Prayers to God, answered he, that I may soon be made Procurator or Superior, to have the Pleasure of going now and then out of my Prison, and, in the mean time, eat, drink, sleep, and sing in the Choir. These Occupations, said I, can't be supposed to fill up the whole of your Time. I have none other, replied he, and don't remember that, for ten Years I have been in this Place, I ever did any thing else. While we were talking a little Bell began to ring, and our Monk told us that it was a Summons for him to repair to the Refectory, begging to be excused for a few Minutes Absence. My Friend, who, from a long Acquaintance, could use Freedom with him, ask'd why he did not wait for the second Table? I could lay a Wager, continued he, that this Evening you have double Allowance. You're in the Right, said the Monk, To-day we live on the Bounty of a rich Partisan, who regularly once a Week regales the whole Convent; he's the Reverend Father-Guardian's Penitent, and does things very handsomely. It were better, replied my Friend, that his Confessor, your Superior, ordered

dered him to retrench your Allowance, and to rob the Publick less, for Mr. D\*\*\*\* pass'es for a great Rogue. As our Conversation was not at all edifying to the Monk, who wanted to guttle, he made us a low Bow, went out, and return'd in half an Hour, with Gaiety in his Looks. Brother *Maurice*, said he, on entering, has done Wonders To-day; what a delicious Piece of Veal, and how nicely dress'd; should the Convent lose him, such a Loss must be irreparable; I would willingly give the first ten Crowns that I shall put aside when I'm Procurator, that he were ten Years younger. I asked if he would fare as well To-morrow? Yes, answered he, a Widow dines us twice every Month, To-morrow is her Day, and she has already sent us Plenty of good things. You're very happy, said I, to have Victuals and Lodging at free Cost, and that by a Quarter of an Hour's Singing, you can gain fifteen Days Subsistence.

Y O U little know, replied he, the Monastick Life, and the unhappy State of those who have embraced it; the Fate of a Slave in *Turky* is less melancholly and less tiresome; he may, in the Midst of his Slavery, lay up Money, and is not deprived of the Hopes of seeing it at an End; but a Monk is condemn'd to eternal Captivity, so much the more cruel, in that he's subjected to Masters more barbarous than the most rugged Patrons of *Morocco* or *Sallee*. Is there any thing so grievous as to be under the Power of a Man, who, disgusted with his own State, revenges himself on others for his unhappy Situation, and makes them answerable for his Misfortunes? This is so strange a Picture, Father, said I, of your State, that I'm surpris'd so many put themselves into religious Orders, and that your Convents are so crowded. Inconsiderateness and Youth, answered he, are the Source and Nursery of Friars; we may look upon  
a young

a young Monk as a Boy, who, at the Age of fourteen or fifteen, is forced to take on Vows that he shall, confin'd within the Walls of a Monastery, torment himself with all Sort of Passions; for being fantastically dress'd, for having the Head shav'd, and going bare-footed, we are no less Men. Notwithstanding Monkish Education, and the Prejudices imbib'd in a Cloyster, Reason, sooner or latter, throws up the Curtain, and shews us Things in their true Colours; and we see at thirty, the Folly we were guilty of at fifteen. The Impossibility of Reparation plunges into Excess of Grief, which in the Event is converted into Hypocrisy and Debauchery. Man, born to be free, can't always bear Slavery, but must, sooner or latter, attempt to throw off the Yoke. You are less happy, said I, than I could have imagined, and I plainly see that there's nothing calm in your State but the Exterior. Were you fully acquainted with it, replied he, you would find it clogg'd with many more Hardships; 'tis true, our Life is nothing else but moving in a constant Round of Sloth and Nastiness, in which a brute Beast might be perfectly happy: Could we be un-mann'd, and not liable to Passions, nothing could be more commodious than to eat, drink, and sleep; for as to the pretended Austerities, for which we so much value ourselves, they are Things which Use makes easy: We accustom ourselves to have our Feet and Legs bare, as well as our Face and Hands; eight Days reconcile us to the Want of Linen, and there's not a Monk who, three Months after his Reception, is not as easy in his coarse Habit, as a Beau in his fine lac'd Cloaths: But it's impossible, so long as we have the Sentiments of rational Creatures, we can ever bring ourselves to that servile Obedience which places us in the Rank of Beasts, which denies us the Privilege of Thought, and makes it

a heinous Crime to hearken to Reason seeking to enlighten us.

THIS Monk would have proceeded in the Description of his Situation, but that the same little Bell, which called him sometime before to Supper, began to toll. "This, says he, is the Warning for Retreat, and whatever Reluctancy I may have to part with so good Company, I must put this Hardship upon myself, and directly go to Bed; the Guardian will make his Rounds in Half an Hour, and as he bears me an Ill-will, would be glad of any Pretext to put me to short Allowance for eight Days." The Thoughts of such a Punishment so frighten'd our Monk, that he drew his Cowl over his Face, and went off without bidding us good Night.

OF all the *Nazarene* Extravagancies, nothing appears so ridiculous to me as that immense Multitude of People, who, at the same time that they are tormented themselves with their Confinement in Cloisters, are a Plague upon the Publick: The most dispicable State is that from which arises the least Utility to Society, but that which is pernicious and hurtful to it ought to be in Horror with all Men of Sense. Of what Service can a hundred thousand lazy idle Fellows be to *France*, who can neither cultivate Arts nor Sciences, nor stand up for the Defence of the Kingdom?

THE bigotted *Nazarenes* pretend that there must be People in a Country who constantly pray for those who are not capable of doing it for themselves; they have great Faith in the Psalms sung by the Monks, and look upon them as a thing on which depends the Preservation, and perhaps the Salvation of the State. Ignorants! who know not that the most acceptable Praises they can offer to God consist in the Purity of the Heart: Would they but throw their Eyes on certain *Nazarene* Countries,



Countries, from whence Monks are intirely banished, they might be easily cured of their Prejudices; they would find that God, far from being offended at the Proscription of such Idlers, had bestowed on those Kingdoms Plenty and Wealth. Consider only, my dear *Isaac*, how many Children would spring from this Crowd of Monks, if one was a Shoemaker, another a Taylor, a third a Barber, and so forth: The same Decree that abolished them, would also open the Prisons of a Number of Girls; and in fifteen Years we should see a Third more People in the Kingdom then now. The *French*, who make use of their Reason, see plainly the Abuse of Convents and Monasteries; but they look upon't as an ancient Error, consecrated under the Veil of Religion, supported by the Superstitious, and protected by the Sovereign Pontife. The different Monkish Orders are so many different Regiments under his Command, and which he garrisons in the different Countries that are of his Faith. By the Assistance of those Troops, who have their different Liveries, Colonnels, Captains, and even their different Colours \*, he has often made the Thrones of the most powerful Monarchs shake, and plung'd a Dagger in their Breasts, in the Midst of their Courts and Armies.

THE *Dutch* and *English* have not been able to get the Monks entirely banished out of their Countries, but they have commanded them not to appear in their Regimentals, so that they are cloathed like other Men. In the Permission which the two States have granted to the Sovereign Pontife's Soldiers, the Grenadiers † are excepted, bold daring People, and ready to undertake any thing that may contribute to the Success of their Designs; they look down upon the other Monks with Contempt, and pretend to be none of their Corps: They are

C c 2

not

\* The Banners. † The Jesuits,

not however simple Ecclesiasticks; and it's as difficult to define their Order, as to unravel their Politicks: They're as learn'd as the other Religious are ignorant, weak Friends, irreconcilable Enemies, rigid in their Morals, and not irregular in their Lives, whatever their Adversaries may say to the contrary; but relax and complaisant to Excess with their Penitents; their Morals are owing to their Politicks, and their regular Behaviour to the good Order and Discipline, which their Superiors make them observe; they're courteous, meek, humble, in particular; proud, haughty, dangerous, deceitful, slanderous, ambitious, beyond Expression, in general; no Dangers can daunt their Courage, and we see them daily making Incurfions into the remotest Nations to set up the *Nazarene* Standard. The Sovereign Pontife has in them a steady Prop, not to be shaken; and when there's any thing grand to be undertaken, he addressees himself to them, which is the Reason that they're often suspected to be the Authors of Things in which they had no Part; they're useful to Society by the Care they take in the Education of Youth committed to their Charge: They have the Character of being Enemies to the Fair Sex, and in this are very different from another Corps\*, who are reckoned the Heroes of Monachal Gallantry: One of them was, some Days ago, catch'd with a sighing Sister, whom he had introduced into the Convent in Man's Apparel. This Affair made a Noise at first, but the Monks endeavoured to stifle it, by asserting the Fact to be false and caluminous.

THE *Frenchman* who told me this Story, said jestingly, "It would be an Advantage to the Nation that the Monks play'd oftner such Pranks, because, added he, they would much increase the Number of People, and consequently become  
" useful

\* Franciscan Friars,

" useful to the State." " Heaven forbid, said another, that such a pernicious Breed should come to multiply in this Kingdom, for we might lay our Account to see the third Generation a Parcel of Monsters; the Father a Lazy-bones, the Son a beggarly Brat, what must the Grand-child be?" Such Discourse shews how little certain *Nazarenes* esteem the Monks and Monkeries.

TAKE care of thy Health, my dear *Isaac*, and may Heaven protect and prosper thee in thy worldly Concerns.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XLIII.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

SOMETIME ago\*, my dear *Isaac*, I wrote thee my Thoughts of that Opinion which damns all those who have not the good Fortune to be born *Jews*. I owned that I could not comply with the Sentence of Damnation pronounced against an infinite Number of honest People, who, in their Religion, have followed the strictest moral Precepts, and obey'd the internal Legislator, that is, the Dictates of their Conscience, and the Light of Nature: I founded my Opinion on the Goodness and Justice of God, to which the eternal Misery of innocent Creatures is directly contrary. I must now frankly tell thee that, on the same divine Goodness and Justice, I'm tempted to establish a second Principle, viz. that the Torments

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\* Letter XXXVI,



ments of the Damn'd will not be eternal, and that, after a certain limited Time, the Souls condemn'd to suffer, will, by the Pains they have endured, be purged and cleansed of all their Stains.

How can it be conceived that God condemns Millions of Creatures to eternal Misery? For, supposing that Man, who was left to the Freedom of his Will, as to Good and Evil, had provok'd the Godhead to punish him eternally, and that Justice being an Attribute as essential to the Supreme Being, as Goodness, this eternal Punishment of the Damned is a just Punishment, the Difficulty in question still subsists, because God having it in his Power to purge Mens Faults by momentary Punishments, 'tis to be presumed that this must be his Choice; the Idea which I have of Clemency (an Idea that can't deceive me, being conformable to the Light of Nature, and proceeding from God) shews me evidently that when there's a Possibility of ending the Torments which a Creature suffers, 'tis unjust to prolong them eternally, without a just and reasonable Cause. I would ask the *Jewish, Nazarene, and Mahometan* Doctors, equally peremptor on eternal Punishments, if God could not, if he would, contrive it so, that the Pains, which Souls suffer after the Dissolution of Bodies, should purify and render them worthy of the beatifical Vision? There's no Divine, I fancy, of any Religion, that dares to assert the Almighty's Incapacity of washing away the Spots of Sin, let them be ever so black: If such a Man there be, we're to look upon him as an Atheist, who limits the Power of God, and consequently debases him; or as a Simpleton, who has not the least Notion, not only of Philosophy, but even of the general Ideas of Order. Let me again ask the Divines, if (when we see a Man suffering Punishment that he has deserved, which nevertheless



nevertheless does not render him virtuous, and that it's in our Power to lessen it, and thereby restore him to his Innocence, and make him hate Vice) we ought not to follow the Dictates of Clemency? to be sure a Man, who is not depriv'd of Reason, can be at no Loss to chuse: Now, as God is Master to terminate the Pains of the Damned, and as he can render these Pains useful and profitable, why would we have him to render them eternal and unprofitable; and that having it in his Power to do Good, he should do Evil? Is it not absurd to maintain, and to believe that supreme Justice is capable of Injustice?

BUT some may say, "You judge of the Attributes of an infinite Being by those of a finite: You pretend to search into the Clemency of God, of which you cannot possibly conceive the least Idea." This Objection is false, and may be call'd the Basis which supports all the Scholastick Absurdities; for I allow that its above my Power to form a full and perfect Idea of the divine Mercy, but that which I have is not false and deceitful, in what it teaches me; because it is conformable to Reason, which cannot deceive me, being the only Light which Heaven has bestow'd to direct me. If the most just and equitable Things in the Opinion of Men are Injustices with God, there's nothing certain; all is turn'd topsy-turvy. What we think Virtue, may be Vice; we shall have no Notion suitable to the Attributes of the Supreme Being, and we must be forced to acknowledge that we have no Idea of it corresponding with those which the Light of Nature furnishes; for if it be allow'd that the Ideas which I have of Goodness and Clemency can be ascribed to the divine Goodness and Clemency, I draw this evident Conclusion, that what is repugnant to these Ideas, can find no Place in the Attributes of God.

God. Now I'm fully convinc'd that it's contrary to invisible Wisdom to inflict eternal and unprofitable Torments, when they may be rendered short and useful: It necessarily follows then that God being capable of rendering the Pains of the Damned useful and momentary, would not have made them eternal and useless, because, being sovereignly wise, Wisdom must constantly attend all his Actions.

OUR sacred Books, my dear *Isaac*, assure us in many Places that God is easily intreated, and that he does not punish for ever \*; why then should we attribute a Cruelty to him directly contrary to his Essence? if some Expressions, which we find in Scripture, seem to favour the Opinion of eternal Damnation, 'tis because we mistake the Meaning, and make a wrong Interpretation. Into what Absurdities should we not run, were we to explain, Word by Word, all the Passages of the Bible?

THE *Nazarene* Doctors, who established the Opinion of eternal Punishments on the express Terms of their sacred Books, have no better Foundation than our Rabbies: They agree that certain Expressions are not to be taken in their literal Sense. Why don't they then interpret these Words, "Eternal Fire, infinite Torments," so as not to clash with our Ideas of divine Mercy? Their Answer to this is, that the Justice of God being an Attribute as essential as his Mercy, it requires the Punishment of Crimes: But this is another Evasion, for as momentary Punishment is sufficient to satisfy Justice, eternal ought not to be required. Here the Question returns again to know if God could not have ordered it so that the most enormous Sins might have been expiated by transitory Torments? Without Doubt he could have done it, being omnipotent: Therefore he certainly has done

\* See Psalm CVII,

done it, because he always does what is best, most charitable, most clement, most merciful; and that it is more agreeable to his Clemency and Mercy to impose transitory Punishment than eternal.

A DIFFICULTY may be here started, which favours the rigid Divines; 'tis that of the future State of Demons: If the Sufferings of the Damned be transitory, the Devils must of course be in the same Case: This at first seems to contradict our most common Notions; but should we reflect a little upon it, and divest ourselves of Prejudices, the Illusion soon vanishes away, and we find nothing impossible, nay even contrary to Reason, in limiting the Torments of Demons; besides, we are ignorant of the Nature of those Spirits; nor do we know if they are such Enemies to Man as is pretended: Who can even assure us that they are not forced to do us Harm, and that God does not make use of them as an Instrument to punish Vice? In this Case, the Evils they commit are not to be imputed to them, since the Angels themselves have sometimes been the Ministers of God's Wrath: A Demon who acts by divine Order, is not more culpable than the destroying Angel, and consequently he's only punishable for his first Fault; why impossible that God will pardon it some time or other, and that it may be effaced by Punishment and Repentance? It would be foolish, on the Faith of Stories handed about by *Nazarene* Monks, and recorded in the History of Conjurations, to assert that the Demons blaspheme God! It may be supposed that they, as well as the Damned, act very differently, and that both being Spirits, disengaged from Bodies, and under no sensual Influences, they must know that the Wrath of God, be it ever so great, can be appeased by a sincere Repentance; and no doubt but that they make the proper Use of their Knowledge. The Fury mentioned in the

*Nazarene*



*Nazarene* Books, is the Vexation that torments the Damned for having offended God; their Anguish is a Homage render'd, which serves as a Preparation to their future State, purges their Crimes, cleanses their Filth, and renders them worthy, at God's appointed Time, to participate of his Mercy.

A PURGATORY which some Religions admit of, is a Proof that there have been Men who thought a guilty Soul might be rendered worthy of the beatifical Vision: 'Tis true, the *Nazarene* Papists have published so many absurd things on the Subject of that expiatory Place, that their Adversaries have justly taxed them with imposing on the Credulous by Fables, the meer Inventions of avaricious Priests; but had they only admitted of a Place to which generally the Souls go after Death, there to remain till they were purified, I could not but have approved of such an Opinion; because, in the first Place, the not admitting of eternal Punishment seems perfectly to correspond with the Ideas which the Light of Nature gives us of divine Clemency; and, secondly, because by ranging all the Souls, after the Separation from the Body, into two Ranks, the one of Happiness, the other of Perdition, is no more nor less than to assert, that at Death some of them are perfectly pure, and others of them totally corrupted, a thing visibly and evidently false; and therefore the Clemency of God requires, that, to favour the Felicity of Souls, there should be a Means to purge those in whom the Evil out-weighs the Good. Now, by admitting a general Place of Rendezvous, in which they may be purged of their Crimes, we abolish the Purgatory of the Papists (a middle Place betwixt Heaven and Hell, invented by designing Monks) and obviate the Difficulties in the  
System



System of those who allow only of the two Classes in the Life to come.

THE DOCTORS, who maintain the Eternity of Punishment, object that the Opinion which makes it temporary, encourages Remissness, and authorises Crimes. "The Moment you persuade People, say they, that the greatest Crimes shall, at last, be pardoned, you open a Barrier to Licentiousness of Manners, to Dishonesty, Murders, Massacres, &c." "Since our Torments, will the Wicked think, shall not be everlasting, let us wallow in earthly Pleasures to compensate the transitory Evils which we are to suffer in the other World; let them be ever so severe, they ought not to terrify us, since we are assured that they will end in eternal Happiness." "The Difference, continue the Divines, betwixt the Virtuous and the Wicked is so small, that it makes but a weak Impression on the latter; for, in supposing thirty thousand Years Punishment, what is that compared to an immense Eternity? a Drop of Water in the Ocean represents but weakly the Difference betwixt that unhappy Time, and an Eternity of Bliss."

THO' 'tis certain, my dear *Isaac*, that these Reasons have a favourable Aspect, yet, upon a nearer Examination, they lose their Force, and we perceive that what is glaring, is not always solid. The more the Punishment, with which Men are threatned, is conformable to their Ideas, the greater Impression it makes on their Minds; consequently, eternal Punishments being not only contrary to the Goodness of God, but even to the Notions of the most simple Men, the greatest Part of the Profligate, the Debochees, and Free-thinkers, totally reject the Belief of Hell, because they see no Proportion betwixt transitory Faults and eternal Punishments; and, Religion not furnishing any  
Idea,

Idea, by which such a Disproportion can be allowed, they give into extravagant Excesses, and reject even momentary Punishment after Death; daily Experience shews the Truth of this, against which no Philosophical Discourses can prevail. Don't we see vast Numbers of rude unpolished People, whom Learning has not taught to despise Hell, extremely indifferent about it, and this intirely owing to a faint Belief of its Existence?

'Tis an Error to imagine that Men, persuaded of the Reality of Punishments limited as to Duration, but extremely pinching and rigorous while they continue, will not endeavour to avoid them; as they're convinced of their Reality, and that it has nothing in it contrary to their Notions, it must necessarily affect them. We have only but to take a View of the Charities which *Nazarenes*, of many different Sects, give to their Priests, of their Fasts, and Pilgrimages, &c. to be perfectly convinced of the Influence which transitory Torments have on the Minds of the most abandon'd Wretches. Let us but throw our Eyes on what passes at *Rome* in the Time of a Jubilee, or Plenary Indulgence; there's few of the *Italian* Banditos, or Robbers, who don't endeavour to gain two or three thousand Years Indulgencies; they have no Thoughts of Hell, their whole Care is to get soon out of Purgatory.

I SHALL end my Letter, my dear *Isaac*, with this Reflection, that when the Affair of future Punishments is settled, so as to be agreeable to the general Notions of Mankind, all Men will necessarily come into it, and consequently their Fears will become useful to the Good of Society; the Atheist, the Debohee, and the Free-thinker, will have no Pretext to dispute the Belief of a Thing which the Light of Nature teaches; nor dare they flatter themselves that their Crimes will remain

remain unpunish'd; they can no longer say, "The Pains with which you threaten us are contrary to the Goodness of God: We have no Notion that a Fault, be it ever so great, can never be expiated: Hell, of which you assure us the Existence, is repugnant to our Notions." Struck with the Truth of an Opinion agreeable to the Ideas of Order, they must be convinced that their Crimes will be rigorously punish'd, and that the Punishments will be proportioned to the Faults; 'tis then, and only then, to avoid this momentary Hell, they'll follow the Example of the *Nazarene Greeks* and *Romans* to get rid of Purgatory; and I may add, that they will be the more affected, in that they'll truly believe its Existence.

FAREWELL, my dear *Isaac*, endeavour to live content and happy, and don't let me long to hear from thee.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XLIV.

ISAAC ONIS to AARON MONCECA.

SOME unexpected Business is the Reason of my not answering thy Letters before now, and I hope, upon that Account thou'lt excuse my Silence. We have had an Assembly of a considerable Number of *Rabbins* and *Caraites* \*, to endeavour

\* *Caraites*, a Jewish Sect opposite to the *Rabbinists*, that's to say, to those who adhere to the *Talmud*. The Word *Carai* signifies a Man profoundly vers'd in Holy Scripture; 'tis for this Reason that they, who found their Faith upon the Bible only, call themselves *Caraites*.

deavour a Reconciliation of Opinions, but, after having long and vainly disputed, the Assembly broke up, without either Side's yielding to the other.

I CONFESS, my dear *Monceca*, that these Conferences have open'd my Eyes, and that I plainly see the *Caraites* have the better of us: I did what I could to persuade my Brethren to abandon certain Opinions, but they stood stiffly on the Validity and Veracity of the *Talmud* \*. I blush'd when the *Caraites* demanded if it could be reasonably requir'd of them to believe, "That God is  
" forced to roar like a Lion thrice every Night;  
" the first, when the Ass brays; the second, when  
" the Dogs bark; and the third, when the Child  
" sucks, and the Wife reads her Husband a Curtain-Lecture? Then God says, Woe's me, I  
" have destroy'd my House, burnt my Temple,  
" and led my Children into Captivity †. Here's  
" a Pattern of that Confession of Faith that you  
" would have us to sign in receiving the ridiculous Errors of the *Talmud*, but we plainly see  
" that they who have such Ideas of God, can neither serve nor adore him. What Honour  
" serves a Being subject to all sort of Weaknesses;  
" obliged to roar, and to turn furious; under the  
" Influence of all sort of Passions, liable to Hatred, Despair, and Repentance; of but an indifferent Understanding, in not having foreseen  
" that, by abandoning his People, he committed  
" a Fault which he would long repent of?"

THE great Number of *Jews* who believ'd the *Talmud* and *Rabbinistick* Opinions, had no Influence on the *Caraites*: "We have no other Writings,

\* A Book in seven Volumes in Folio, containing the Body of the *Jewish* Law, especially the ceremonious Part, composed by their Rabbies, and of great Authority among them.

† *Heiden de origine erroris*, Pag. 255.



“ tings, said they, on which we found our Faith,  
 “ but the twenty-four Books of the *Bible* \*; you  
 “ agree with us, that they have been composed  
 “ by Persons on whom God had breath’d his Spi-  
 “ rit; we therefore reject all human Traditions  
 “ that are contrary to them; what can the Opi-  
 “ nions of Men do against the Orders of God?  
 “ he’s neither subject to Change, nor to Passions,  
 “ and were he such as your *Talmud* would make  
 “ him, the Creator would be more contemptible,  
 “ and more to be pitied, than the Creature.”

I CAN’T conceive, my dear *Monceca*, how my Brethren give into a Number of Ideas so little agreeable to that which we ought to have of the Almighty; that Medley of Chimeras and Superstitions which we have added to the written Law astonish a Man of Sense, and give him a Disgust at certain Ceremonies, which would be more reasonable, were they less numerous: Superstitions are to Religions, what the young Shoots are to Trees, they suck the Juice, deprive the Trunk of Sap, and render the Tree barren. In the different Religions that fill the Universe, it is easily perceived that those which are most loaded with superstitious Ceremonies, are the least practis’d in their Essentials. A *Jew* will break some one or other of God’s Commandments ten times in a Day, without perceiving it; his whole Attention seems to be confin’d to observing the Ceremonies and Customs of the Sabbath: Such there be who would rob and commit Adultery, but would by no means cut their Bread with a Knife belonging

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\* The Author of the *Caraité* Commentary, called *Aaron*, Son to *Joseph* (who lived towards the End of the XIIIth Century, and whose Work is preserved in MSS. in the Library of the *Peres de l’Oratoire à Paris*, i. e. The Fathers of the Oratory at *Paris*, to which it was brought from *Constantinople*) approves of all the Books of the *Bible* contained in the *Jewish Canon*, and reckons them twenty-four in Number, as the other *Jews*.

to a *Nazarene*: If such Customs were commanded by the Law, let them be ever so ridiculous, they might be maintain'd, but as they have no other Foundation but the chimerical Visions of some of our Seniors, I must join Issue with those who, making Use of the Reason which God has beflowed on them for their Conduct, reject every Thing that is not expressly commanded in our holy Books, and since thou'rt a Friend, to whose Discretion I can safely trust my most secret Thoughts, I tell thee plainly, that I'm resolved to change Sides, *i. e.* to abandon *Rabbinism*, and list myself *Caraites*: My Change, I know, will make a Noise, and raise Murmurings in our Synagogues; such a Step in an ancient Rabby, will open the Eyes of many, and may be attended with dangerous Consequences; but no human Interests ought to be put in the Ballance with Truth, when we perceive it. To accomplish this grand Design with the least Noise that's possible, I have already notify'd my Intentions of going into *Egypt*: *Grand Cairo* is the Place where I am to fix my Residence, and live with my new Brethren, the only Observers of the Law of *Moses* \*. As thou may'lt perhaps imagine that I have embraced this new Opinion without a thorow Examination, I shall give thee a full Account of the Reasons which determined me.

OUR Rabbies say that *Moses* had several Commands given him on the Mountain, besides those written in the two Tables, or even contain'd in the *Pentateuch*; and, to prove the Evidence of this Assertion, represent that, if God had not reveal'd other Things to *Moses* than the written Law, an Hour, or, at most, four or five, had been sufficient;

\* There are a great many *Caraites* at *Cairo*, *Constantinople*, and even in *Moscow*; they have seperate Synagogues, and look upon themselves as the only true *Jews*.

sufficient; and from thence conclude, that he gave it in the Day-time, and explain'd it in the Night. This Explication is what they call the Oral Law, taught by *Moses* to his Successor *Joshua*, and by him to the Seventy Seniors, who transmitted it, so commented upon, to their Posterity, and even to the last of the Prophets, from whom the *Sanhedrin* \* received it: From that Time, to this very Day, it has been handed down, from Father to Son, and serves for a Rule, when the written Law is silent.

I SHALL not consume Time in examining on what the Rabbies ground their Opinion of God's having delivered the Law in the Day-time, and explained it in the Night, of which there is not the least mention made in the Bible; but allowing, in order to abridge the Dispute, that the Almighty gave *Moses* several verbal Commands, yet I can't believe that he employed so many Days to prescribe the ridiculous Ceremonies and extravagant Notions of the *Talmud*. If I should allow that *Moses* received several Orders from God, which that Prophet did not put down in Writing, but which we have by Tradition, yet I maintain that what is absurd and ridiculous in that same Tradition has been added, in process of Time, and that every Age augmenting it with some Error, the *Talmud* is the Collection of that pretended Tradition.

IF thou consider'st, my dear *Monceca*, in what Manner this monstrous Work has been collected, composed, and brought to its Perfection, thou'lt

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\* The grand *Sanhedrin* was the supreme Council or Court of Judicature among the Jews at *Jerusalem*, consisting of the High Priest and seventy Seniors or Elders, who consulted about and decided the greatest Matters in their Ecclesiastical or Civil Government. The Word *Sanhedrin*, taken from the Greek, *Συνέδριον*, signifies *Confessus. i. e. An Assembly of People sitting.*

see Errors, Absurdities, and Lies abounding more and more, in Proportion to our Distance from the Days in which the written Law was given. Towards the Year 188 of *Nazarene* Supputation, the Rabby *Juda Hakkadosh* made a Collection of the Writings of the High Priests, called *Mishna*, from which the *Talmud* draws its Original; and though there are many Things to be found fault with in it, yet it is not, by far, so bad as the second, made in 469 by the Rabby *Jochanan*, and some other *Hebrews* his Assistants: In short, about the Year 476 *Ase* and *Hammai*, Rabbies of *Babylon*, augmented the Visions of this Book, and brought it to what we now see it, excepting some ridiculous Errors which the Rabby *Meir* join'd to his Father *Ase's*, whose Papers he had.

Now let me ask thee, my dear *Monceca*, if thou think'st that the Authority of such a Work (of which we see the Errors rising higher and higher from Time to Time, and which bears no Resemblance to the first Simplicity of our Religion) ought to prevail with me more than the Writings of *Moses* and the ancient Prophets, or the Light of Nature which demonstrates evidently that the *Talmud* is nothing else but a Medley of Impostures, Chimeras, and Blasphemies? What Man is there, I don't say of Knowledge, but of the least Degree of Understanding, who would not greatly despise a Book which asserts, "That God has commanded a Sacrifice to expiate his own Faults?" if God be a Sinner and subject to Vice, he's not perfect, but liable to all the Misfortunes of human Nature? how can he who is guilty of Crimes pretend to punish them? I tremble, my dear *Monceca*, in transcribing such Blasphemies, and my Hand with Difficulty holds the Pen; till now I had but superficially examined my Religion; I was misled partly by Prejudice and partly by Negligence, but  
this



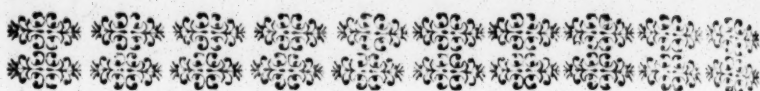
this Dispute has enlightned my Mind, and open'd my Eyes on the monstrous Errors into which I was plung'd: The Moment I perceived that our Adversaries had Reason on their Side, I made use of no evasive Sophistry, but honestly acknowledg'd my Fault, and my Humility has contributed to extricate me out of the Abyss in which my Brethren, the Rabbies, remain immerfed.

ENDEAVOUR to follow my Example: Shake off Prepossession and Prejudice, and let thy Reason, my dear *Aaron*, be the Champion that shall encounter and defeat them; consider that if there be a God, he cannot be such as the *Talmud* represents him. None is more fully convinced than thou art of the absolute Necessity of the Existence of a Being independent and sovereignly perfect, let me therefore exhort thee to fall in with the Opinion of the *Caraites*, who, instead of affronting, have all due Respect for the Divinity. I wish that in the Country where thou art, Custom may not have prevail'd on thee to lay too much Stress on Traditions, the usual Refuge of the *Nazarene* Papists, and the Rampart of their Errors; but remember that there have been among them a Sort of *Caraites*, who, by purging their Religion of certain Errors, have settled it on the Foundation of its first Establishment. Make use of their Arguments to reject a Tradition that is not conformable to the Text.

MAY Heaven direct thee in thy spiritual and temporal Concerns, and may thou be happy here and hereafter.

*Constantinople, \*\*\*\*\**

LETTER



## LETTER XLV.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

THY Letter, my dear *Jacob*, treating of the *Genoese* and *Piedmontese*, gave me no small Pleasure. I envy thy Fate, since I'm persuaded no Happiness can equal that of being a Traveller, who is constantly entertained with new Objects, instructive as well as diverting, so that he cultivates his Mind in an agreeable Manner, and studies in the great Book of the World, in which alone we are taught to know Mankind. Let our Genius be ever so strong, we can acquire, by the Help of Books, but a superficial Knowledge of the Customs and Manners of Nations: In the most exact Relations of a Country, several Anecdotes, or private Transactions, are passed over, tho' extremely useful to display the Characters of the People, and the only Way to remedy this, is to live among them. I might add to support my Opinion the Contradictions in most of the Travellers Journals, and Partiality with which they are writ.

THE ancient Philosophers were generally great Travellers. *Plato* went to hear *Euclid* at *Megara*; and *Theodorus*, the Mathematician, at *Cirena*, he travell'd into *Egypt*, to confer with the Priests; and, 'tis reported, that, while there, he instructed himself in our Religion; but this is certain, that he speaks of God in a more noble Manner than the other Pagan Philosophers; and yet he gave in to Errors which are very remote from our holy Law: He maintain'd that there was but one God  
omnipotent,

omnipotent, the Maker of all Things, but admitted of inferior Gods and Demi-gods participating of his Divinity, and under his Command \*: Such a Doctrine is incompatible with *Judaism*, the Unity of God being the Basis of our Faith.

THE first *Nazarenes* were almost to a Man Followers of this Philosopher, imagining that they discover'd in his Writings all the Mysteries of their Religion. One of their Pontives declares, that *Plato's* Works contributed not a little to his Knowledge of many Truths of the *Nazarene* Faith †: And two other Doctors pretend, that he knew one of their deepest Mysteries ‡, so that he was within a Hair's Breadth of being rank'd in the Number of their Saints. The Necessity of supporting their Opinions by the Authority of some famous

\* *Plato in Timæo dicit & in legibus, & Mundum Deum esse, & Calum, & Terram, & Animos, & eos quos majorum Institutis accipimus. Cicero de Nat. Deorum, Lib. I. Cap. xii. i. e. Plato in his Timæus* \* and Institutes, makes universal Nature to be God, and, to the visible Creation, adds the Spirits whom our Ancestors deified.

\* A *Pythagorean* Philosopher, by whose Name *Plato* intitleth one of his Dialogues, and whose Order *Aristotle* followeth in the Disposition of his Physicks.

† *Narravi ei (Simpliciano) circuitus Erroris mei, ubi autem commemoravi, legisse me quosdam Libros Platoniorum, quos Victorinus quondam Rhetor Urbis Romæ, quem Christianum defunctum esse audiveram, in Latinam Linguam transtulisset: Gratulatus est mihi, quod non in aliorum Philosophorum scripta incidissem, plena Fallaciarum & Deceptionum secundum Elementa hujus Mundi; in istis autem omnibus Modis insinuari Deum et ejus verbum. Augustinus Confess. Libr. III. Cap. II. i. e. I fairly own'd my Error to Simplicianus; and when I took Notice of my having perused some Books of the Platonists, which Victorinus (formerly a Rhetorician at Rome, where, by Report, he died a Christian) had translated into Latin, he congratulated me upon my not having met with the Writings of other Philosophers full of Deceit and Fallacy, according to the first Principles of this World, but with those in which God and his Word are many Ways hinted at.*

‡ *Justin Martyr, and Clemens of Alexandria.*

famous Philosopher, at a Time where every one chose the Sect which they thought most agreeable, obliged them to adopt *Plato's* System as the most suitable to *Judaism* and *Nazarenism*. The greatest Part of them were so fully persuaded of the pretended Religion ascrib'd to this Philosopher, that near 796 Years after the Establishment of their own, nothing less would serve them, than to bestow on him the Spirit of Prophecy. In the Reign of *Constantine* and *Irene*, his Mother, an ancient Sepulchre was open'd, in which was found a Body, and affirm'd to be that of *Plato*; he had a Plate of Gold about his Neck, on which was engraven the following Inscription: *The Christ will be born of a Virgin; I believe in him, and this Evidence of my Faith will be seen in the Days of Irene and Constantine* \*. It would have been easy for People, not led away by Prejudice and Prepossession, to have seen that the Plate and the Inscription were as modern as the Tomb was ancient; but the *Nazarene* Doctors, desirous of Miracles, laid hold on this, or, at least, endeavour'd to impose it upon the Vulgar; and a certain Monk, sur-nam'd *L'ange de L'ecole*, i. e. the Flower of the School, some other Writers †, and, lately, a Jesuite ‡, have made many useless Remarks on this Inscription.

I CAN'T conceive what can put it in the *Nazarenes* Heads to support the Truth of their Religion by such Fables, since such gross Absurdities are rather Means to destroy its Credit, than to raise it: I'm the more surpriz'd that they're guilty of such Faults, having no manner of Occasion  
for

\* This Fact is reported by *Zonarus* a Greek Historian, translated into Latin by *Jerome Wolfius*, and printed at Bale in 1557. See Tome III.

† *Paul* the Deacon, *Libr. XXIII. Sigibert Genebrard*, *Libr. III.*

‡ *Canisius* on the blessed Virgin, *Libr. II.*



for those pious Frauds; for, after all, to speak without Reserve, there are few Religions supported with so strong Proofs as the *Nazarene*. I have had several Disputes with some learned Men, and was confounded with certain Things, of which I was almost persuaded; and it must be acknowledged, that if the Prophecies have not been really accomplish'd, they have come so nigh, that whoever would examine them, must find Difficulty to support our Opinions. The *Nazarenes* accuse us with having now no other Refuge to fly to, but the Etymology and Signification of certain Words: They say, that not being able to make good our Point by the Evidence of the Text, we endeavour to perplex it with ridiculous Glosses, and by unnatural and forced Explications of certain Expressions. I'm oblig'd sometimes to grant these Facts; but then I fly to our Tradition, and make use of the same Weapons with which they combat the Adversaries which they have in their own Religion; they can't well refuse me a Thing from which they themselves draw such Advantage, and to which they grant so much Authority; and thus I make use of our Tradition as of an impregnable Rampart, opposing the Authority of our Rabbies to that of the Pontives, and our *Talmud* to the Books of their Fathers, and if I don't clear up the Dispute, I'm sure, at least, to make it endless.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that I should be sometimes at a very great Strait, if the *Nazarene* Papists made against us the same Objections which the reformed *Nazarenes* urge against them, and that they reduced me intirely to the Scriptural Text, and to the Light of Nature: Such a Manner of disputing, as it prevents all Evasion, is terrible; there's no quibbling in this case to elude the main Point; the only Recourse is to cavil on certain Expressions,

Expressions, and to give a more or less favourable Turn to some Passages: Less than this will prove the Foundation of Disputes for Ages, and set many of the Learned to write Volumes in Folio; but in those Sort of Disputes, whoever will examine them without Prejudice, judges more easily of the Question in Debate, than when he must conciliate the different Authorities of many Writers, and the Validity of their different Expositions and Traditions.

THE *Nazarenes*, in general, are fond of supporting their Reasons by Miracles and Prodiges; a surprizing Event, howsoever ridiculous, has more Attractives with them than a Geometrical Demonstration; there's nothing happens, or done by them, but what Heaven has an immediate Hand in it: Gain they a Battle? 'tis not to their Valour that they're indebted, but to St. *George*, and St. *Victor*, who leaving their celestial Mansion, come down and put themselves at the Head of their Battalions, and divert themselves with cutting off Heads and Arms \*; a sad Employment, in my Opinion, for any but Mad-men, and much more so for a Saint. Thou'lt perhaps fancy that those whom they came to assist were good Men; by no Means; they were infamous Robbers, who, under the Cloke of Religion, and under the Pretext of a holy War, committed all Sort of Abuses, Murders, and Rapines. The *Nazarenes* can't refuse these Facts, and attribute to those Crimes the bad Success that attended the Enterprize. A certain Man, named *Bernard*, who had preach'd over all *Europe* for the Execution of this Expedition, and who prophecy'd many fine Things upon it, was the first bit by the bad Success of that holy War, and,

\* The Battle of *Iconium* \*, gained during the Crusade of Holy-War.

\* The Metropolis of *Lycania*, in *Asia* the Less.

and, to save his Reputation, could find no other Expedient than to attribute the Cause to the Crimes of those who undertook it. A pretty Manner of prophecyng this, to proclaim what will never happen, and not to say a Word of what will really happen.

HOWEVER disgusted the *Nazarenes* ought to be of the chimerical Ideas with which they have been so often infatuated; if To-morrow a Couple of Monks, who had acquired some Reputation, should again begin to preach, there would be still Multitudes silly enough to go and piously commit all Sort of Crimes in the *Palestine*\*, and sacrifice Men to the God of Peace, to whom Murder and the spilling of human Blood is so odious.

THE *Nazarenes* don't dispute this Principle, and their Church even boasts of its abhorring Blood; one would therefore think, that by a necessary Consequence their Government and Instruction of Men would be mild and reasonable; but it would seem that it was a settled Maxim with them to think one Way and to act another: Nothing is so soft, so pathetick, as their Discourse; nothing so rugged, so hot, and so violent, as their Management; and, what is most surprizing, they imagine that the Iniquity of their Actions is varnish'd o'er with a fair Out-side. When the Inquisition condemns a *Jew* to be burnt in *Portugal*, the Inquisitors make him a handsom Compliment, and assure him that it's with extreme Grief they are going to commit him to the Flames; and as it would not be fit for them to pronounce the Sentence of Death, they cause it to be read by a secular Judge.

ALL these ridiculous Cruelties put me in mind of a pretty singular Expedient found out in the Reign of *Charlemagne* by the good Archbishop

E e

*Turpin*;

\* A Country of *Asia*, anciently call'd *Philistea*, or the Land of the *Philistines*.

*Turpin*; to dispatch now and then some *Saracens*, he made use of no Sword in Battle, the Church abhorring Blood, but with a Club, of the Size of *Hercules's*, knock'd them down \*,

*And prov'd his Doctrine Orthodox,  
With Apostolick Blows and Knocks.* HUD.

A TIME has been, when the condemning of a Man to the Gallies, for the Improvement of his Mind, was look'd upon to be a special Favour, which he, on whom it was conferr'd, ought never to forget. Let such Practices be constantly confin'd within the Sphere of Error and Delusion, and let us never attempt to persuade but by mild and reasonable Means, even though we had the same Power as the *Nazarenes*.

THE vast Extent of their Religion, and the great Number of Profelytes daily made, are for ever sounding in our Ears; but they're blind enough not to perceive that in place of true Children of *Nazarenism*, they only draw over a Crowd of Slaves. The *Spaniards* think they act piously when they compel the *Indians* to bow the Knee before some holy Image, and extort a Consent of being receiv'd into their Communion, in which they no longer continue, than they can lay hold of a favourable Opportunity of giving those Tyrants the Slip, and getting among their Countrymen.

VIOLENCE in Religion appears monstrous in the Eyes of a Philosopher; 'tis impossible to imagine that the God of Peace should chuse a Worship in which human Blood is shed upon the Altars. The pious Cruelty of the *Spaniards* has sacrificed more *Mexicans* for the Propagation of *Nazarenism* in one Day, than *Diana's* Priests did in the Temple of *Ephesus*, or in all *Ionia*, during the whole Continuance of *Paganism*. What Crimes!

what

\* *Boyardo*, and *Ariosto*.



what Murders! and what Robberies have been committed in *Europe*, since 200 Years, under the specious Pretext of Religion! Into what Excesses is not the Mind of Man, smitten with Superstition, capable of being transported? We have seen the Son plunging a Dagger into the Father's Breast, and imagining that, in piercing his Heart, he made his own Way to Heaven! Let such pernicious Sentiments, my dear *Brito*, remain with *Nazarenes*; and let us be always persuaded that Violence is the last Shift of a Religion that wants Truth to convince.

TAKE care of thy Health, and let me hear from thee.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XLVI.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

THY Letter, my dear *Isaac*, gave me no small Surprise, and I make no Doubt but that thy Change will be a Thunder-clap on all the *Jews*, and extremely afflicting to thy Brethren. I'm persuaded thou hast seriously reflected before thou resolved on embracing the Opinions of the *Caraites* \*; but I could have wished that thy Determination had not been so sudden. Sometimes on a first or second View we may fancy Things to be clear and evident, which, however, on a third, become Problematical. It would appear that thou dispisest too much the Authority of Tradition: I'll allow that it must yield when the Text is against it, but, at

E e 2

same

\* See Letter XLIV.

same time, if the Text be obscure and unintelligible it may be an useful Help in explaining, and in that Shape ought to be admitted. All Religions, even those that are the most contrary to Tradition, allow of it when it neither contradicts Reason nor the Authors of Antiquity, and this is what I think ought to have been examined; but I'm afraid it has lost all Credit with thee, for it appears by thy Letter that the Parts, in which thou hast found it contrary to Truth, have made thee indifferent about inquiring if it was just and true in others: Let this be as it will, and whatever Way thou think'st, nothing shall be able to diminish my Affection to thee. I loved thee as — *Rabbineſt*: I shall love thee as — *Caraites*; and should'st thou turn *Nazarene*, my Heart would follow thee to their Temples. The Friendships of this Age are nothing else but a Sort of Commerce, which Necessity, Decorum, and sometimes Pleasure, oblige Men to support, and that Union, which Esteem and Sympathy cement in Hearts truly virtuous, is a thing unknown to them, but 'tis my Happiness to feel the Effects of Friendship from what ought to be the noble Motives of it, and consequently to lie under no Temptation of imitating their Example\*.

Some

\* Friends in this Age are liable to the same Reproaches with which *Cicero* branded the *Epicureans*. " Some of the *Greeks*,  
 " says he, who had the Reputation of wise Men among them,  
 " had very extraordinary Sentiments on all that I have now  
 " said; for there's no Extravagancy to which the Subtleties  
 " of those People don't carry them. Some of them advance,  
 " that too strict Friendships are to be avoided, to prevent our  
 " being troubled with other Peoples Affairs, every one having  
 " enough of his own, and nothing so troublesome as to have  
 " a Share in the Concerns of another; and that the most  
 " commodious Friendships are those whose Reins (so to speak)  
 " are slacker, and may be lengthen'd or shorten'd at Pleasure,  
 " since, to live happy, the Secret is to keep ourselves free of  
 " all sort of Cares; a Thing impossible, when we have the  
 " Charge

Some are pleased to think that the Fair Sex are in the tip-top Mode, with respect to Friendship, subject to the Ebbings and Flowings of Pleasure, this regulates the Measure of the former, and the Friend feels as often the Effects of their Caprice as the Lover.

THERE are in *Paris* twenty-thousand Women who have had but one Lover during their whole Life, and who have not kept in Friendship with any one Person for the Space of three Months. This Assertion will appear to be carried too far, and thou'lt scarcely think it's possible that in a Town where the Ladies are reckon'd so gallantish such a vast Number should confine themselves to one Lover: I believe thou'lt more readily allow of twenty thousand who have had none at all, than that they kept to the first. Methinks I hear thee saying, "That it requires more Modesty in  
 " a Woman to confine herself to one Lover, than  
 " to remain without any. What Pain can it give  
 " her to be without a Pleasure of which she's intirely ignorant? her Virtue is not reduced to  
 " combat against the dangerous Ideas which represent to the Mind certain Situations, the most  
 " terrible Enemies of Women who have experienced the Sweets of Love."

I ALLOW that there's something surprising in this Opinion till it is duly examined, but then it appears so plausible that we can scarce refuse siding

E e 3

with

" Charge of other Peoples Affairs, and that we're in a manner under constant Pains of Labour for them."

*Nam quibusdam, quos audio sapientes habitos in Græcia, placuisse opinor mirabilia quadam. Sed nihil est quod illi non persequantur suis Argutijs: partim fugiendus esse nimias amicitias, ne necesse sit unum sollicitum esse pro pluribus: satis superque esse suarum cuique rerum. Alienis nimis implicare molestum esse, quam laxissimas habenas habere amicitia, quas vel adducas cum velis, vel remittas. Caput enim esse ad beatè vivendum securitatem, quâ frui non possit animus, si tanquam parturiat unus pro pluribus.*

Cicero de Amicitia, Cap. xiii.

with it. The Character of Infidelity given to Women is principally founded on an usurped Right in our Sex of prescribing severe Rules to them, almost impossible to be observed, and from which we have thought proper to exempt ourselves: They fancied that they had a just Authority to require of Women an absolute Victory over Nature, while they indulged themselves in all Manner of Freedoms, and yielded to every Impulse. To judge then of the fickle Temper which we are pleased to ascribe to the Fair Sex, things must be put upon a just Equality, not to require Impossibilities of them, and to examine without Prejudice if, notwithstanding the Lightness attributed to them, they are not a hundred Times less inconstant than Men.

WHEN a Beau is guilty of Infidelity, his Profession justifies his Conduct, he discharges his Duty, and none exclaims against his Treachery: The Mistress that he abandons is an Addition to his Triumph; but should she revenge herself of her Lover's Infidelity, by giving him a Rival either to punish or call him back by Jealousy, 'tis enough, she's a false inconstant Coquet, and condemn'd by the whole Race of Lovers, without Benefit of Clergy, so that the same Action, which raises the Beau's Reputation, loses the Woman for ever who has been so unhappy as to love him.

A JEALOUS, fantastical, peevish, bigotted Husband fancies Chimeras, and takes for Realities the frenetick Visions of which he is possessed; the whole Matrimonial Society take his Part; he's pitied, his Spouse condemned without a Hearing, and the whole Sex included in the dreadful Decree pronounced against her by this jealous Senate; and from Generation to Generation every Father names her to his Son as an Example of Infidelity, thus instilling into him his own jealous Maxims.

A FOP



A FOP gives himself Airs with a Woman whom he scarce knows, he talks to her in the Church, ogles her at the Opera, and accosts her in the publick Walks, which is enough to make the Publick believe he's well with her, so that by way of Recompence, for what she has suffered from this intruding Sot, she acquires the Reputation of a kind Lady, and if she has the Misfortune to meet with more than one, they're so many Lovers which the Publick is pleased to lay at her Door.

THESE are, my dear *Isaac*, a Part of the Reasons on which is founded the Inconstancy of the Fair Sex: The Multitude judges on this Occasion as on all others, and its Judgment is no more rational in this Case than it uses to be in others.

TWO Reasons determine me to think that Women are more constant than Men: The first is a Sort of Shame that goes along with their Levity, and which, whatever may be said, lays them under a terrible Constraint. The second is the Vivacity of their Inclinations. The most passionate Man is but as Ice compared to a Female who truly loves. The Fair Sex are the unhappy Slaves of *Cupid's* arbitrary Sway, and exposed to all the Rigour of his Transports and Agitations, with a Mixture of Tenderness, Fear, Anger, Spite, Hope, and Jealousy: All these Passions reign in the Heart of an amorous Woman, sometimes by Turns, and often altogether.

HISTORY has preserved the Names and Actions of many Women who have distinguished themselves for their Constancy and Fidelity; and, without going to remote Ages, we dayly see Examples that justify my Opinion. A *Nazarene* Doctor of my Acquaintance, and one of our renowned Directors of Consciences, told me that the delicate tender Passion, in the Fair Sex, was the fiercest Enemy which the Tribunal of Absolution had to deal

deal with at *Paris*. I have in former Letters explained this spiritual Sort of Pool, in which the Monks have a Power of washing away Sins, on Condition that some Prayers and Abstinences be regularly performed. They all agree that a Woman, who has been engaged in different Intrigues, will sacrifice a Lover rather than fast three Saturdays; but they affirm that she, whose Heart has been but once touched, will rather undergo ten Lents than to be debarred from the soft and tender Language of the Eyes.

THOUL'T perhaps ask me how the Women, so faithful in Love, are so unconstant in Friendship? My Answer is, That commonly Friendship with them is nothing but a Pretext to favour Love. Whoever speaks of a Woman's Bosom-Friend, means her Confident; the faithful Discharge of his Employment, is the Period of his Reign; the Moment he's negligent, or becomes useless, his Credit drops, he becomes indifferent, and sometimes troublesome; the Secrets with which he is trusted oblige her to carry fair with him, and this Constraint naturally begets Hatred.

BE under no Apprehension, my dear *Isaac*, that such shall be the Fate of our Friendship; it is founded upon Virtue, and cemented by Esteem, so that nothing can shake it; thy Life is as dear to me as my own, and *Orestes* was not more tenderly loved by *Pylades* \*. I must own that the Thoughts of thy Change put me under terrible Fears, I could wish it were not known till thou art got out of *Constantinople*. Write to me the Moment thou get'st on Ship-board, and think what Uneasiness I'm under: I dread the Hatred of thy Brethren, because I know the vindictive Temper of our Nation; they'll leave nothing unattempted to

\* *Orestes* and *Pylades* are recorded for a Pair of true Friends, each contending to die for the other. *Cicero de Amicit.*

to punish thy Desertion. Here's an Instance of their Fury:

WHEN *Spinosa* had published his Book, the *Jews* were enraged against him as an Apostate, the more dangerous in that he was thoroughly acquainted with all the Principles of our Law, perfectly Master of the *Hebrew* Language, and had it in his Power to do us much Harm; he had not however as yet intirely given up Communion with us, but went, for Form's Sake, to the Synagogue: One Day, as he was coming out, a bigotted *Jew* gave him a Stab with a Knife, but happily the Wound proved not mortal; this Accident made him abandon the Faith of *Isarel*, and give up all Correspondence with us.

OUR Nation has been at all times vindictive, and has even been perfidious in Resentments: The Concern I'm under for thy Life obliges me to speak against my Brethren, but, after all, thy Safety excuses my ripping up old Sores: *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Historian, whose Authority is of great Weight, accuses our Fathers of an implacable Hatred and Antipathy against all those who were not of their Faith, and some *French* Writers pretend that we were not chased out of their Country but for our Attempts to imbroil the Nation; others accuse us of Designs to poison the Wells and Fountains; and the Knights of *Malta* attribute the Loss of *Rhode-Island* to our hatred of their Religion. Let me therefore beg of thee, my dear *Isaac*, to be on thy Guard, and to look to thy Preservation.

IF thou consider'st how much Prejudices inspir'd by Superstition are to be dreaded, thou can't be too cautious against the Attempts of bigotted Zealots, the more dangerous as they are covered with the Cloke of Religion. How often has this specious Pretext served to colour the most secret Vices? Bigottry under the Name of Zeal for *Nazarenism* deprived

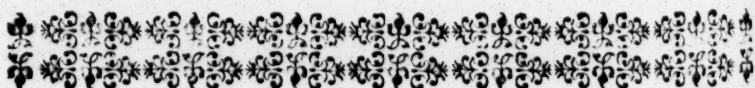
# 332 JEWISH LETTERS.

deprived *France* of the greatest of its Kings: The Superstition of Monks induced them to make Attempts upon his Life; and, at last, a Monster thrown up from the sulphurous Lake, seduced by pernicious Discourses, nourish'd in Rebellion, and born for the Misfortune of his Country, executed in a Moment what twenty Battles could not accomplish.

HATRED that springs from a Difference about Religion is implacable, and seems with most People to justify the most enormous Crimes: The Priests, deeply concerned in such Quarrels, exasperate Men by their Preachings, Exhortations, and by Example. The People eagerly follow those who are at the Head of their Religion, being accustomed to look upon them as the Oracles of God, so that thou may judge what Crime a weak Man is not capable of committing when he thinks he's executing the Law of the Almighty, and securing to himself compleat Happiness.

THINK, my dear *Isaac*, of what I tell thee, dread thy Brethren the Rabbies, fear the other *Jews*, and, in short, be on thy Guard with all those whom thy Change may concern, and may thou live as quiet and content as I wish.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XLVII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I'M going soon for *Venice*, my dear *Monceca*, and I don't think of remaining eight Days longer at *Turin*. I have already communicated what I thought most remarkable in the Customs and Manners of the



the *Piedmontese*, and since my last Letter I have discovered little or nothing. This Nation's Way of living is so uniform that it does not furnish that Number of Remarks which one has an Opportunity of making at *Paris*; at *Turin* they act and think the last Day of the Year just as they did the first, and Dress is the only Thing in which we can perceive a Change. The Ladies and Beaus carefully follow the *French* Modes, but there's no sudden Change in Manners and Customs; this Nation knows nothing of changing Opinions from Morning to Night, which is owing to their want of Vivacity and Inconstancy. If St. *Paris* had acquired at *Turin* the Credit which he had sometime ago at *Paris*, he would have still preserved it, whereas this poor Saint has none now for him but a few Fanaticks and Fish-women.

THEY have a great Veneration in this Country for one *Philip de Neri*, who is in Heaven the Advocate and Protector of the City of *Turin*; he has a magnificent Temple \*, adorned with Pictures done by the best Hands †; in one of them he is represented as carried by Angels and Cherubims, and received by God into Glory. A great many Lamps constantly burn before this Image, and 'tis there the *Piedmontese* prostrated offer up Prayers to their Protector; near to this Altar is the Chancel, where they pretend God resides, and yet for one who makes his Addresses directly to him, a Hundred put up their Petitions to *Philip de Neri* to be convey'd by him to the Throne of Grace.

THE *Nazarenes*, and particularly the *Italians*, seem afraid to direct their Petitions to God himself, and

\* This Church is not yet finished, they're at work upon it now, and it will be one of the most beautiful in all *Italy*.

† There's one by *Carlo Maratti*, another by *Trevisani*, and a third, viz. The Reception of *Philip de Neri* into Heaven, by the famous *Solimaine*.

and in this they may be compared to certain Persons, who having offended some Man of Note, have neither Resolution nor Courage to support his Presence, and therefore employ a third Hand to make up the Breach. I asked them if they thought, when they made their Addresses to *Philip de Nerri*, that God did not hear them, and if it was their Opinion that every thing was not present to God? Their Answer was, "That they were far  
 " from supporting any such Error." "If it's so,"  
 " said I, and that God knows your Conversation  
 " with this Saint, why don't ye address yourselves  
 " to him directly? this would be a Means to avoid  
 " Ceremony, and to abridge Delays, for in the  
 " Time that your Protector is making his Report,  
 " God would have already heard you."

THE *Nazarenes* endeavour to elude these Reasons by vain Sophisms: They pretend that by the Intercession of a Saint, whose Prayers are always pure, and acceptable to the Almighty, the Requests are more readily granted. Poor deluded People! who perceive not that it's the Purity and Disposition of the Heart of him who prays on Earth that obtains the Favour of Heaven, otherwise a Rogue and a profligate Wretch might flatter themselves to obtain from a merciful God as much as an honest good Man; God would not judge of Hearts but through the Channel of Saints; the Celestial Court would be turned into a *Norman* Jurisdiction\*; and one would be saved or damned according to the Merit and Skill of their Solicitor, or their Advocate, whose Friendship might be brib'd by a great many Flambeaus burnt to his Honour, or by some other Presents. If Matters were thus managed,

\* The inferior Judicatures in *Normandy* are very liable to Corruption, so that when any inferior Court in *France* has pronounced an unjust Sentence, the Proverb is — *They have Normandiz'd.*

managed, I assure thee, my dear *Monceca*, that this *Philip de Neri* would have Business enough upon his Hands from all the Corners of *Turin*.

I WAS yesterday Witness to the Celebration of his Festival: A Monk pronounced his Panegyrick, prais'd him much for not marrying, and obliging all his Disciples to imitate his Example by entering into the Order of Priesthood, from which all who are not in the State of Celibacy are excluded. This Preacher enlarged on Chastity and on the State of Purity, and drew so beautiful a Picture of it that the Counter-blow was terrible on Matrimony. I was very much surprized that he was allowed to utter publickly Maxims so contrary to the Good of Society. "If all they, said I with-  
 " in myself, who hear this Declaimer, are per-  
 " suaded with his Sophistry, *Piedmont* will soon  
 " be depopulated: We shall see nothing but Priests,  
 " Monks, and Bigots, for sometime, and soon  
 " after Society must perish, and the Country be  
 " destroyed. According to this Preacher, the State  
 " of Celibacy is by much the purest, and much  
 " more agreeable to *Nazarenism*; those in a Re-  
 " ligion who believe it ought to aim at Perfection;  
 " therefore all the *Piedmontese* ought to follow  
 " his Advice, and, by remaining in the State of  
 " Celibacy, ruin Society."

OUR holy Religion, my dear *Monceca*, teaches a very different Doctrine, it ordains Multiplication, a Favour promised and granted to us by Heaven as an essential Mark of its Goodness: Vanity has in Part been the Cause of suppressing Marriage amongst the *Nazarene* Pontives, imagining by this Means to procure more Respect from the People. 'Tis reported that, when they assembled to discuss this Question, all the old Men were of Opinion that the Permission for the Priests to marry should be continued, and that the young strongly

F f

opposed

opposed and carried it. Since that time the Disorders that have ensued upon this Ordinance have made all Men of Sense regret the Privation of ancient Usages: One of the Sovereign Pontives says expressly in his Writings, "That it would be highly necessary, in order to prevent and put a Stop to many Crimes, that things were put upon the ancient Footing\*." When the Preacher had ended his Panegyrick, several Hymns were sung, accompany'd with Instrumental Musick, and the famous *Somis* play'd the Violin in such a ravishing Manner, and so harmoniously, that all who heard him seemed to be in Extasy and Raptures. In all the Encomius lavished on *Philip de Neri*, there was but little mention made of God; they only invoc'd him, by the by, when the Ceremony was drawing to a Close.

In coming out of the Temple I ask'd where I might once more have the Pleasure of hearing this famous Musician who had ravished and enchanted me? I had heard *Montanari* at *Rome*, a Disciple of the famous *Corelli*, the Father of Harmony, he equalled this *Piedmontese* in execution, but had neither his Taste, Softness, nor the Stroke of his Bow; the *Greeks* would have certainly erected a Statue to so great a Man, and a great many might have been found who would have certified that *Apollo* had lain with his Mother, they would have even maintained, to his Face, that he was not his Father's Son; and, after his Death, he would have received at *Athens* the same Honours that are paid to *Philip de Neri* at *Turin*. I was told that I might hear him play at a weakly Consort in a private Gentleman's House. I begg'd a Friend to introduce

\* Pope *Pius II.* amongst whose Sentences and Proverbs we find *Sacerdotibus magnâ ratione sublatis Nuptias majori restituendas videri.* *Platina in vitis summ. Pontif. Rom. Edit. Venet. 1518. i. e.* Strong Reasons restricted the Priests to Celibacy, but Stronger Reasons plead for their being allowed to marry.



roduce me, and I heard another Musician\*, who; for the Violoncello, equall'd *Somis* on his Instrument. It appeared to me that Heaven had made these two Musicians the one for the other, and that none else should presume to join in consort with them: The few fine Voices that I heard surprized me, there's scarce one or two tolerable in *Turin*, and their Symphonists are as excellent as their Singers are contemptible; but this is a Fact which that Nation, very much convinced of their own good Taste, will scarce allow.

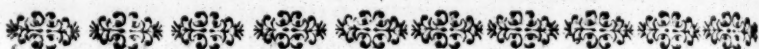
PAINTING is in great Esteem at *Turin* as in all *Italy*, but at present it scarce affords any thing but Dawbers, if we except *Beaumont* the King of *Sardinia's* Painter; he's tolerably good at Colouring, and delineates correctly, but dull and languid, little vers'd in History, and fond of his own Performances, far short of the Perfection to which he imagines they are carried. There was sometime ago a Painter in this Country, call'd the *Chevalier Daniel*, by Birth a *Fleming*, skilful in Colouring, as those of his Country generally are, and surpassing them in Design; he died sometime ago, and this *Beaumont* succeed him in his Post.

THE *Piedmontese*, in general, are Lovers of Arts, but extremely ignorant in Sciences, as I have already told thee in former Letters: When we mention the Men of Learning in *Europe*, the Question is directly, 'Are they good Catholics?' should we happen to tell them that they're *Armenians*, *Protestants*, *Jansenists*, or *Jews*, to be sure *Le Clerc* is a Booby, *Bayle* a Sot, *Arnaud* a Liar, and *Leon* of *Modena* an Ignorant; they can't conceive how it's possible that a Man, who is not of their Communion, can have common Sense, and whoever believes not as the Monks, can neither attain to Knowledge in this World, nor Salvation

in the next. The Libraries of the Learned in this Country are composed of a great many Divines of this Side the Mountains, and some *Italian* Poets; they who set up for Criticks in the living Languages, add, to such Books, some Romances and *French* Novels reprinted at *Geneva*, from whence they get them. By this thou see'st, my dear *Monceca*, that were a Man to study forty Years in these Libraries, he would reap no other Benefit but to have his Head fill'd with Fables and Chimeras, and thou may also judge from this of the Genius of the *Piedmontese* Philosophers.

FAREWEL, my dear *Monceca*; let thy next Letter be directed for me at *Venice*.

*Turin*, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER XLVIII.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

SINCE I came to *Paris* my Esteem for the Learned is much increas'd, while at *Constantinople* I had not duly reflected on the Excellency and Grandeur of their Office, but now I look upon them as the Preceptors of Mankind, and the Organs which God makes use of to reveal the Secrets of Nature: Far from imitating the *Piedmontese*, who only esteem the learned Men of their own Religion, I have a Regard for Science and Merit wherever they're to be met with; I respect them in a *Nazarene*, in a *Mahometan*, and, laying aside what regards Religion, I take the Advantage of their Knowledge.

THE Learned are accused of Pride and Haughtiness, but this Character is not applicable to those who have justly acquired Reputation: None could  
be

be more polite and civil than *Bayle*, more sociable than *Des-Cartes* and *Gassendi*, and more modest than *Locke*: They who take such Freedoms of Speech with the truly Learned, confound them with some little Scribblers, who have as high an Opinion of their own Merit as the Publick undervalues them. *Racine* was a whole Year upon his Tragedy of *Pbedra*, the Master-piece of the Stage; before it was acted, he had it revised by his Friends, made several Alterations by their Advice, and the Success of the Piece was the most convincing Argument with him of its Goodness. *Pradon* composed a Piece on the same Subject in a Month, presented it boldly on the Stage, and assured the Publick that it was excellent, but it happened to him as it commonly does to *Grub-street* Performances, to be sent to Snuff-Shops; whereas *Racine's* will be preserved to latest Posterity.

RESERVEDNESS and Modesty are the peculiar Talents of great Men; they're content with the Praises which their Merit procures them, without soliciting the World to bestow them; and in this they're the more Praise-worthy; for if Vanity be pardonable, the Man of Learning has the best Title to it.

WE have daily Instances of Honours bestowed on a Coxcomb of Quality, Son, Grand-Son, and Great-Grandson, to as unworthy Men as himself; and, because a Man can reckon up a long Race of ignorant and ridiculous Ancestors (in whose Footsteps he treads) he must, forsooth, be exempted from many Taxes, and enjoy several Privileges to raise him above the rest of his Fellow-Citizens! What is it to me that one of a Man's Fore-fathers commanded a Troop of Horse in the Holy War? Shall I be obliged to honour a Simpleton, because one of his Ancestors kill'd a *Saracene*, or because he has been beyond Sea? And

shall I look with Indifference upon a Man useful to the whole World, by his Systems of Morality to reform Manners, by his Mathematical Discoveries, the Means of enriching Nations, and, by his Learning, transmitting to the latest Posterity the History of our own, or of past Times? A Man must be as great a Fool, and as weak as he whom he honours, to prefer empty Titles to Science and Virtue. Men are now out of Conceit with that servile Respect which they formerly paid to old musty Titles, equal, if not greater, through all *Europe*, than that which the *Egyptians*, in old Times, had for Crocodiles, and their Garden Onions, but now that Servitude is thrown off, and no where to be found but amongst our *German* Petty-Princes. In this Country every Man who, misfortunately for Mankind, happens to be born a Baron, or Lord of a Manor, has a Right to tyrannize over a few Peasants, and believes himself to be one of the most considerable Sovereigns of the World, tho' his whole Territories are often contain'd within the Compass of a League, and his gross Ignorance, if the World contains above two hundred, is the only Excuse for his Vanity. In many Countries we frequently meet with Petty-Tyrants, who have nothing of Nobility but the Antiquity of their Family; of Manners, but the Depravation; and of Man, but the Resemblance. Can it enter into thy Thoughts, my dear *Brito*, that a Person who makes use of his Reason can prefer such Noblemen, meer Animals, to People illustrious for their Learning, and to be valued for their Integrity? Because a Man has a Right to add the Title of Duke, or Marquis, to his Name, must he also have that of imposing upon People of Sense? If this were the Case, Nobility would be a Sort of Witchcraft in the Opinion of the Weak.



POSTERITY wisely regulates the Recompences due to the Learned, whom she equals to the greatest Princes: Three thousand Years after Death, their Glory vies with that of the most renown'd Heroes. *Homer* is as well known as *Achilles*, and the Name of *Virgil* as famous as that of *Augustus*. The ingenious Historian, the celebrated Poet, the profound Philosopher, preserves an Advantage over the Conqueror and the General; the Memory of the latter only presents to our Imagination the Remembrance of some Actions past; but the Works of the Learned transmit and revive, from Age to Age, their Genius, and an Acquaintance with their Authors; twenty Ages after their Death, they speak with the same Eloquence and Fire as when alive, and their Genius communicates itself to all those who read their Writings. At this very Day we find *Horace* and *Virgil* such as they were at *Augustus's* Court. The Heroes who have made themselves illustrious only by their Actions, make not the same Impressions upon our Hearts; the plain Narration of a Fact is less moving than a brisk enliven'd Conversation; 'tis thus good Writers communicate their Thoughts to our Minds. I participate of *Ovid's* Trouble, when I read his Elegies. I trace Nature in the Works of *Lucretius*, and fancy that I hear him unfolding the most hidden Secrets of it.

THE Heroes are infinitely indebted to the Poets and Historians, who are seldom under any Obligation to the former. *Achilles* owes a Part of his Glory to *Homer*. Had there been no Historians, scarce would we have known that there was an *Alexander*: That Prince was very sensible how far a great Monarch, an able General, or a renown'd Conqueror, ought to esteem himself happy to have the principal Events of his Life transmitted

ted down to Posterity by a celebrated Writer. How many Heroes, as famous as *Achilles* and *Ulysses*, lye in eternal Oblivion, for want of a *Homer* to perpetuate their Actions?

I know not, my dear *Brito*, if thou'lt be of my Opinion: I look upon a truly learn'd Man as one appointed by Providence to act a Part, both now and in after Ages, superior to that of many Princes and Monarchs. Who can pretend to know that Crowd of Kings who have had no other Fame but of sitting supinely on their Thrones, and who seem'd to be cloathed with Royalty only to shew the World that they were not capable of supporting its Weight? Their Names are to be found in the Chronological Tables of Empires; a few who read History know that in such a Year such a Prince reign'd; the rest of Mankind are either intirely ignorant if he ever liv'd, or only know his Name; but when a Man of Learning leaves his Works to Posterity, from Age to Age he rises in Fame, and Time only serves to heighten his Merit. Every Nation welcomes him as their Countryman, and his Writings are translated into all the different Languages; from the North to the South-Pole he's known, respected, and cherish'd; Children, Men come to Maturity, and old People, all are acquainted with his Works, know certain Passages by Heart, which they often recite with great Pleasure; and Fathers of Families reckon the Collection of great Mens Writings as a Part of the Inheritance which they leave to their Children; 'tis in those Libraries, so common now-a-days in *Europe*, that a learned Man sees himself, as it were, multiplied even in his own Lifetime; he makes the Genius that animates him transpire through all the Kingdoms of *Europe*, and, at the same Instant of Time, the Hearts of two Men, one in his Closet at *Stockholm*, and another in

in the Midst of *Paris*, are equally satisfied, charm'd, and ravish'd.

THE reading of some Works has such a powerful Influence on our Minds, that it raises in us a higher Esteem and Veneration for the Authors than what a personal Acquaintance would produce; and I scarce can allow myself to think that ever any *Nazarene* would have been for canonizing *Socrates*, if he had been particularly acquainted with him while he liv'd. A Doctor, in these latter Days, was tempted, as often as he read the glorious Exit of this Philosopher, to rank him in the Number of the blessed *Nazarenes*, and acknowledges that it was with no small Difficulty he could hinder himself from calling out, *Holy Socrates, pray for us* \*. What Numbers of Princes, Generals, and Noblemen, lived in the Days of this great Man, whose Memories were lost with their Persons? And what Numbers have been transmitted down to us, whom we neither regard nor esteem?

BELIEVE me, my dear *Brito*, whatever Ignorance may pretend, Study is the only true Path that leads to remotest Posterity †; 'tis a Means offer'd to the Poor as well as to the Rich, to the Plebeian as to the Nobleman, and nothing but  
Virtue

\* *Vix tempera quis dicam, "Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis."*  
*Erasmus in Colloquijs.*

† "By Study, says an Ancient, the Philosopher becomes wiser; the Warrior more intrepid and more experienced; the Sovereign governs with more Equity; and there's not a Person in the Universe, in whatever Rank Fortune has placed him, to whom the Study of Sciences does not communicate new Perfections."

*Desiderabilis eruditio Litterarum, quæ naturæ laudabilem eximie reddit ornatum; ibi Prudens invenit unde sapientior fiat; ibi Bellator reperit unde animi virtute roboretur; inde Princeps accipit quem admodum Populos sub æquitate componat; nec aliqua in mundo potest esse fortuna, quam Litterarum non augeat gloriosa notitia.* *Cassiodor. Var. Libr. I. Pag. 3.*

Virtue and Application can qualify a Man to make a greater Progress than his Competitors. I can't but laugh when I see People flattering themselves to be recorded in Posterity for mounting a Breach! There's scarce a petty Country Gentleman who does not imagine that his being a Lieutenant of Foot must undoubtedly transmit his Name to After-ages; he believes that the whole Universe, some time or other, will be taken up to know if the *Chevalier.de Figeac, Cognac, Reignac, &c.* died in his own Village at home, or in the Trenches. None has better describ'd the State of a Subaltern Officer than *Racine*. *Agrippina*, speaking to *Burhus*, thus upbraids him for his Ingratitude:

*Vous — que j'ai pu Laisser vieillir*

*Dans les honneurs obscurs de quelque Legion.*

But for my Friendship, long thou must have stood Unknown, save in the Legion where thou serv'd.

THE Notion which most of the *French* have that their Actions will be a Subject of Entertainment to Posterity, and the Prejudice in which are even the meanest of the Gentry, that all *Europe* have their Eyes upon them, are Means that the Government makes a right Use of. People are always found who are ready to dare all Dangers, Hunger, and Fatigue, only from the Hopes of raising themselves above the Vulgar; for one that succeeds, thirty thousand die *with the obscure Honours of their Legions*; but the Example of one is enough to encourage and animate all the rest.

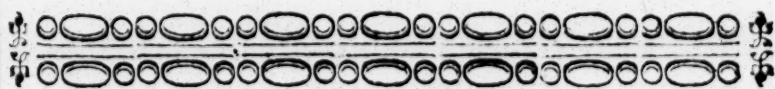
THE *Chevalier de Maisin* (of whom I have often made mention) told me a pretty merry Story of a Country Gentleman who had pass'd a considerable Part of his Life in the Service, disgusted at last, what by his Wounds, Fatigues, and small Hopes of Advancement, he retired to his Village to end his Days in Peace and Quiet, yet in his Retirement



tirement he still kept up to his warlike Disposition, and was constantly entertaining his Curate and the Peasants with his past Exploits, and even what he would have done had he continued in the Army. He happened to fall sick, and when he was at the last Extremity, the Curate propos'd the Performance of a certain Ceremony that the *Nazarenes* observe when they're at Death's Door, which they think very essential; it consists in a certain Sort of holy Oil, with which a Priest anoints all the Members of the sick Person; the Officer agreed to every thing, but when the Curate was preparing to do his Duty, "Sir, said he, since I am so unlucky as to die in my Bed, after having escaped at ten Battles and twenty Sieges, let me be exempted from the Burgher-Ceremony, change at least something of it; and if, to be saved, I must absolutely be rubb'd, I think Brandy and Gun-powder will make an Ointment much properer for a military Man and a Getleman, than your greasy Oil."

FAREWELL, my dear Friend; study Contentment to make thee happy.

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*



## LETTER XLIX.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I ARRIVED at *Venice* about a Week ago, and in all my Travels have not seen a more charming Place: To behold a City in the Midst of the Sea, and built upon the Waters, is a thing so surprising that Custom can scarce reconcile us to it:  
All

All the Streets are divided by Canals, and the People go from one Part to another of the Town in Gondolas, little cover'd Boats, instead of Coaches and Equipages.

THE Government of this Republick is Aristocratical: The Senate, of which the Doge is President, directs all publick Affairs, but he alone determines as to Peace, War, or the Taxes. Were one to judge of the Doge by the Gravity of an affected haughty Behaviour, by the Sumptuousness of his Apparel, and Magnificence of his Palace, he must certainly conclude him to be the Sovereign of *Venice*, and yet he's but as a Fantome that represents the Authority of the Senate, and has often less Credit than another Noble; he's restricted to one Voice as a simple Senator, and his imaginary Sovereignty only intitles him to go to all the Courts of Judicature and publick Tribunals, where he may give his Opinion on any intricate Business, but every other Senator has a Right to oppose him.

THE noble *Venetians* are grave, proud, infatuated with the Granduer of their Rank, and Slaves to their Dignities; they must have no Correspondence with Foreign Embassadors, or any belonging to them, and but little with Strangers of a certain Rank; such Familiarities are inconsistent with State Policy; were they to do otherwise, it would be a means to bring them under Suspicion, and furnish a plausible Pretext to exclude them from the Administration. The Nobles are divided into three Classes; the first, in its Institution, contain'd only twelve Families, which they call Electorals; but in little time thereafter four were added, and afterwards eight more: The second Class is made up of all the Nobles whose Names are written in the golden Book: And the third takes in those whose Families have been enobled upon the Payment

ment of a hundred thousand Ducats when the Republick was pinch'd for Money: The Nobles of this last Class are not admitted into the principal Employments, they're at *Venice* what the People are in *France* and *Piedmont*, who are intitled to forget their Ancestors by the Acquisition of a Piece of Parchment.

THESE Nobles of new Creation have no less Pride than the Ancients, they look upon themselves as Equals to the greatest Princes, and all inferior Persons in their Country must have a Deference and Respect for them that borders upon Servitude. A *Frenchman* taking a Turn in *St. Mark's-Square*, happen'd inadvertently to jostle a noble *Venetian*, who, stopping him very gravely by the Arm, ask'd which of all the Beasts he thought most dull and unwieldy? The *Frenchman*, surpriz'd at such a Question, and how it came to be ask'd at him rather than another, was some time without answering; but the *Venetian*, without losing any thing of his Gravity, renewed the same Question, and the other innocently told him, that he thought the Elephant was the unwieldiest of all Creatures: "If so, said the proud *Venetian*, learn, Mr. Elephant, that a Noble is not to be jostled:" *Empara, Signor Elephante, che non s'impegne un nobile Venetiano.* Another Noble being in a narrow Street, and a *Spaniard*, with a long Tolledo before him, who stopp'd up the Passage, he gravely ask'd the Don, if he must pass above or below the Sword? *Signor si cavalca o si passa Sotto?* It would be dangerous to make suitable Returns to such Ralleries; whoever is saucy to a noble *Venetian*, brings himself into a Scrape which he will not easily get out of.

SLANDER will have it that, in the principal Families, one Brother marries for all the rest. I'm apt to think this Custom is not so common

as they would make us believe, but I don't think, on the other hand, that it's altogether unpractis'd; the Character and Vanity of the *Venetians* may give Occasion to a Conduct so blameable. If in a numerous Family every Brother should marry, the great Number of Children that must come, would soon impoverish the richest: That Grandeur so idolized by the Nobles being no longer supported by Riches, would languish at the second Generation, and almost quite evanish at the third; for it's at *Venice* as elsewhere, a Noble that's poor is much less esteem'd than a rich one.

DEVOTION is no Bar upon the *Venetians*, and it may be safely affirm'd, that if the Brothers in many Families had but that Obstacle to surmount, in order to enjoy the Privilege of having but one Wife in common, such promiscuous and odd Conjunctions would be soon publickly made.

THE *Venetians* believe but so, so, in God, very little in the Pope, and very much in St. *Mark*: This Saint is the Patron and Protector of their City ever since his Body was brought to it from *Alexandria*; before him St. *Theodorus* was in Post, but the Vanity of the *Venetians* could not be satisfied with an ordinary Saint, who was only proper to protect a Republick in its Infancy; they resolv'd to have a new Patron, whose Reputation might answer to their present Grandeur, and therefore chose a First-Rate Saint, degrading their ancient Protector. A Temple has been built in honour of the new Patron, which vies with the most magnificent of *Europe*, and to immense Riches within it, are annexed extravagant Revenues. The Nobles appointed to manage them (a Part whereof is appropriated towards the Relief of the Poor) are called the Procurators of St. *Mark*, and are intitled to wear the ducal Robe, a sort of Simar or  
long



long Robe, of which the Sleeves hang down to the Ground.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great Respect which the *Venetians* have for *St. Mark*, they're not a whit the better Christians; and the Chief People even think it a Piece of Honour to have very little Religion. An Ambassador of the Republick, sent to the Court of *Sardinia*, was desired by a Bishop to speak to some *Piedmontese*, who corresponded with *Geneva*, to use their best Endeavours in bringing back to the Communion of *Rome* one of his Nephews, who had abandon'd it, and retired to that City. The Ambassador, after his Arrival at *Turin*, was in no Hurry to execute the Bishop's Commission; but happening one Day to be in Company with Delegates from *Geneva*, he remember'd his Request, and ask'd them, if they knew a certain Refugee, naming him? They answered, that they did, and spoke very well of him. "I'm charm'd, said the Ambassador, that he's such as you describe him; his Uncle, the Bishop of *Aquapendente*, was very earnest with me to endeavour to bring him off from you; and I'm the more surpriz'd that he should have employ'd me about his Conversion, since such Commissions are very seldom given to *Venetians*."

THE Liberty enjoy'd in this City has drawn many great Men to it, as a Place of Sanctuary against the Biggotry of other *Italians*. *Peter Aretin*, a Native of *Arezzo*, in *Tuscany*, so famous for his satyrical Works, and for many others, came and settled at *Venice*, in the Beginning of the XVIth Century, to enjoy the Liberty of Writing with Freedom. The *Nazarene* Pontives condemned his Works, and particularly his Dialogues, Letters, and rational Discourses, but that did not hinder them from being publickly printed at *Venice*, even in the Time that they lay under

Condemnation, and of several other Editions afterwards being printed and publish'd in the Face of the Magistrates.

THE *Venetians* in general are neither so lively, nor so ingenious, as some other Natives of *Italy*; the Reflections which they make on Things they are about undertaking, is the Cause of their Slowness; they deliberate maturely on an Affair before they begin it, and very seldom miss of bringing it to a good Issue. The Men are generous, cunning, and extremely prudent; the Women, haughty, insolent, and, by no means, Slaves to the Virtue of Chastity. The Ladies of Rank at *Venice* have Hearts so tender, that a pressing Lover, and a favourable Opportunity, seldom miss of engaging them to capitulate; the Citizens Wives follow their Example, and the lowest Class make Gallantry a publick Trade, which has its Rules and Maxims. Of half a Score Girls that turn Prostitutes, nine are sold by Mothers and Aunts, who settle the Articles before-hand, viz. the Price of their Virginity, which is generally a hundred or two hundred Duckats, and the Time of Delivery, which is as soon as possible; and all with a View to procure them Husbands. A Mother, who had sold her Daughter's Maidenhead to a Foreigner for a couple of hundred Duckats, finding him dilatory on pretext of the Girl's not being fully ripe; as she was more skill'd in what related to Women's Abilities than this Gentleman, and knew that her Daughter could fully perform her Part, she could no longer bear Delays, and therefore went to his Lodgings to know his last Resolution. "You must be so good, Sir, said she, as to determine yourself speedily, for the Reverend Father who preaches at one of the most noted Convents of *Venice*, and whom she named, has entered on a Bargain, and already made a very reasonable  
" Offer

"Offer." The Stranger, who was perhaps glad to wind himself out of this Affair, and to save his Money, consented that the Reverend Father should have the Purchase, who finished it in due Form, not finding the Fruit so green as the Gentleman imagined.

BESIDES private Gallantries there's a surprising Number of *Curtezans* in *Venice*, where they enjoy a full Liberty, and are often in very great Regard with the People: If any of their Keepers Sisters happen to be Nuns, they go frequently to visit them, and are very graciously received, seldom leaving the Convents without Presents of Confections and *Agnus Dei's* \*, for the *Curtezans* of *Venice* are as numerous and devout as those at *Rome*; Saturdays are their Days of Fasting, they list themselves under the Protection of some Saint for whom they have a profound Veneration; in short, they perform the Functions of their Trade very decently and piously.

THERE'S nothing so diverting for a Philosopher, or for any Man of Reason, than to take a Turn, about nine o'Clock at Night, in *Serena street*, at *Rome*, he may see two hundred Females sitting very composedly at the Doors of their Houses in Expectation of Customers: When any Adventurer comes to purchase what will cost him a long Repentance, like a Sultan he chuses among the *Belles* whom he thinks most deserving of the Handkerchief, and is immediately conducted to her Apartment. The Rooms of those Priestesses of *Venus* are much the same, and all on a Level with the Ground; a little Bed with white Curtains, a Table, three wooden Chairs, the Image of a *Madonna* (before which there's a Lamp that serves also to light the Room) are the whole Furniture. Be-

G g 3

fore

\* A Piece of Wax blessed by the Pope. having the Print of a Lamb, or some other holy Hieroglyphick.

fore things are carried to a certain Point, there's a Curtain drawn before the Image, that she may see no Indecencies; and when all is over, the Picture is uncover'd; and this happens ten times in a Day when Trade is brisk.

WHAT a melancholy thing is it that Prejudice should be carried to such Lengths, and that Men should imagine Religion may be conciliated with such Disorders? As I can judge of thy Sentiments by my own, I'm perswaded thou'lt readily join with me in commiserating the unhappy Fate of a deluded World. Adieu.

Venice, \*\*\*\*\*.



## LETTER L.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I HAVE narrowly escaped the greatest Danger I ever was, or shall be, I hope, exposed to while I live; one Step further and I was undone: What a dreadful Precipice! and how I tremble to think where my Folly and Rashness led me! the dismal Prospect dims my Sight, chills my Blood, infebles all my Joints, and throws me almost into Fits: What Thanks! what Acknowledgements are not owing to kind Providence for this miraculous Deliverance! and — but I forget that I should have told thee my Case — Know then, dear Friend, that *Aaron Monceca* was within a Hair's Breath of being caught in *Cupid's Net*: Drawn by a lovely, witty, pretty, fickle, Creature; judge then to what a terrible State I must have been reduced, had it been my Fate to become the Slave of so dangerous



ous a Beauty ; a Heart such as mine could never bear with a *French* Girl's Notions of Love ; accustomed to the Sincerity and plain Dealing of the *Grecian* Ladies, I could never put up with the jilting coquetish Ways of the *French*, and I believe none can but he who is a Native of the Country and knows no other Behaviour. The *Nazaren*es in general are greatly mistaken about true Love, and I dare venture to affirm that it is a thing unknown in *France*, *Italy*, *Germany*, *England*, and even in *Spain* ; *Asia* alone is the happy Climate where that Passion governs with Delicacy and Reason ; but as thou may not have adverted to the *Nazaren*es Manner of managing their Amours, I shall briefly give thee my Thoughts of each Country.

TAKE a *Frenchman*'s own Word for't and he's all Flame, but it's all Grimace ; fickle and unsteady in his Temper, and naturally giddy-headed, he dances, sings, whistles, and cuts Capers to his Mistress ; the Moment he succeeds, she's forsaken, and if she's cruel, he's easy ; a Verse or two of Lampoon is a sufficient Revenge for his lost Labour ; away he drives after new Game, and acts the very Part that he did with his Insensible ; Enjoyment cools him, and Rigour disgusts him, so that nothing can fix his Inconstancy.

AN *Italian*, steady in his Projects, and firm in his Resolves, attacks a Heart as a General does a Town, he disposes his Batteries, invests his Mistress's House to prevent Rivals from throwing themselves into it, keeps secret Correspondence with a Wating-Woman, or some other domestick Spy, and if his Attack proves successful, Madam is confined during Life, and, as a Reward of her Affection, loses her Liberty ; but if he's forced to raise the Siege, he revenges himself on his Rivals,  
by

by Poison; and on the Object of his Love, by the basest Calumnies that Rage and Malice can devise.

THE *Englishman's* Pride disdains the Conquest of a Heart that makes the least Struggle, he has such a good Opinion of his own Merit, that he thinks no Woman can be Proof against it, neither does he think himself indebted to her for complying; if he's lov'd, 'tis but what he deserves; and if otherwise, he's easy under the Disappointment, not doubting but others will be clearer sighted; he reckons that his Riches should measure his good Luck, and judges of a Heart by the Guineas which it costs him.

THE phlegmatick *German* is not easily moved, his slow, dull, cautious, and thoughtful Temper renders him insensible, and without *Bacchus* all *Cupid's* Art is vain; his Passion grows with Wine, and evaporates with its Fumes; if sometimes he runs away from dear Indifference, Phlegm soon brings him back, and makes him cold as *Greenland* Ice.

THE proud *Spaniard* imagines that he loves to Madness, and will swear to you that the malicious little God tosses him up and down like a Tennis-Ball; all Day long he sighs in the Church, and all Night under his Mistress's Windows, where in Carnival Time he plays on his Guitar, and in Lent piously whips himself for the Honour of his *Dolcinea* \*; all the Saints are called to his Assistance, particularly *St. Francis* and *St. Anthony*, and if no Help comes from Heaven, he has recourse to Hell, consulting Conjurers, Wizards, and Witches, not in the least apprehensive of the

Inqui-

\* 'Tis a constant Custom in *Spain* to make Processions in the Night-time during the Holy Week, a great many whip themselves in the Streets by way of Penance, and when they come under their Mistress's Windows, they make a Pause and give themselves a hundred hearty Lashes to her Honour and Glory.

Inquisition: Is he happy, he forgets all the Trouble and Pains he's been at, and, which is more, even his Love; and perhaps stabs the Person whom he adored, more from a Motive of Vanity than Jealousy.

IN *Asia* Love is a soft solid Passion, not rendering Hearts furious, but laying them under an agreeable Disquiet; no Invocations, nor Conjurations, no Whipings, nor Macerations, to obtain a Lady's Favour; and seldom, very seldom, see we Men, in that happy Country, cloy'd with the Possession of what they once loved, so that they're less guilty of Follies for the Women than the *French*, but more sincere and constant in Love.

IN *Nazarene* Countries Men are the principal Cause of some of the Fair Sex's Failings, by the daily Examples they set before them of Treachery and Falshood: A Woman, who knows that her Husband commits Adultery, and that he looks upon the Crime as a meer Piece of Gallantry, believes she may do so too. A young Person whom a Lover abandons, after a thousand solemn Promises and reiterated Oaths, imagines that Perjury and Infidelity are but trivial Faults, since her Lover's Reputation is not stain'd by them.

NEVER Man was exposed to more imminent Danger than I, my Heart felt already all the first Impressions of a deep and dangerous Passion, my longing Eyes could bear no Objects but the bewitching Features of my Fair, and, in one Word, I could have kiss'd the Chains that were to fetter me, when happily Reason and Reflection came to my Relief, and rescued me from Ruin. I considered what a boisterous Sea I was to navigate, what Storms I must expect to meet with, and, perhaps, be shipwreck'd ere I reach'd the Port, or disappointed of my Expectations when in it: Thus spoke Reason and prevail'd, for I resolved to see  
the

the Charmer no more, and Absence completed the Cure. I would not be thought to make a Merit of my Insensibility, for I scarce think there's any Man who has not, once in his Life, felt *Cupid's* Darts; but if I must love, I would not have my Passion to prove a Punishment, but to contribute towards my Happiness.

I LAUGH at those Philosophers, who have made a Merit of being always insensible; I could as soon pardon a Man for boasting that he had been always stupid; for after all, my dear *Brito*, Tenderness for the Fair Sex is the noblest Present that Heaven has bestowed on us: Is it not the Delicay of Sentiments that distinguishes us from other Animals? and is it not to the ardent Desire of pleasing, that we're indebted for our most curious Discoveries? Sculpture and the Art of Drawing were the happy Invention of an ingenious Mistress; and 'tis pretended that Love gave the first Idea of Writing: Were we to trace the most considerable Events to their Original, we should find that Love had been the Source of all. *Europe* owes to this Passion the greatest Part of its Diversions; and were it not for the Entertainment of the Fair Sex, many Pleasures would never have been thought of. "The Vulgar make their Court to their Sweet-hearts with Wine, Confections, and Dainties; the Men of Quality and Fortune divert their *Belles* with Plays, Balls, Masquerades, and Country Jaunts." Without Love, all Nature would languish; 'tis the Soul of the World, and the Harmony of the Universe. God gave Man, at his Creation, a natural Propensity to the Female Sex; and as this Inclination is a Present made us by the Divinity, we ought by no Means to be ashamed of it; we only follow the natural Impulse, which has nothing



thing criminal while it remains uncorrupted by our Vices and Debauchery.

'TIS my Opinion, that the *Nazarenes* are mostly addicted to criminal Love, that's to say, a Woman, whom they can't love without being guilty of a Crime, has more Charms than another, particularly the *French*, who maintain that Marriage is the Bane of Love, and that this Passion is dull and languid without a small Seasoning of Sin. They tell us, on this Head, a pretty remarkable Story, which I don't take upon me to certify for Fact, tho' mention'd by an Historian of great Authority \*: 'Tis commonly reported by the Debochees in *France*, that the End of the civil Wars which brought their Country to the very Brink of Destruction, in the Beginning of *Henry IV's* Reign, was owing to two or three *Curtezans*. The Duke of *Maenne*, Chief of the Confederacy against this Monarch, was of a slow and dilatory Temper, which favour'd the bold Enterprises of his Enemy: In the Heat of the Rebellion, having, misfortunately for him, been prevail'd upon to go to *Caranalet* House with four or five of his Friends, he was guilty of a Debauch with some Women of Pleasure, who made him a Present that confined him to his Room for several Days †; but the Affairs of his Party allowing him only to take palliative Remedies, the Poison fortified itself within, and render'd him still more heavy, sullen, and morose; and, in his Person, enervated the Vigour of the Faction: In Effect, the Duke, in a little Time after this Adventure, wearied and fatigued with the Toils of War, harken'd to Proposals of Peace.

HAD the Duke's Adventure happened to *Henry IV.* the Papiſt Historians of those Days, great Lovers of Prodigies, would have certainly transmitted

\* *Mezerai.* † *Mezerai's Chronol. abridg. Anno 1589.*

ted to Posterity the Miracle of the three *Curtezans*, in favour of the League; but as this Accident regarded the Chief of the holy Society, they have taken care not to say a Word about it.

THIS Story is a Proof evident enough of the Debauchery and Incontinence of *Nazarenes*; they condemn the *Turks* for Plurality of Wives, whilst they ruin their Healths, and lose themselves with common Prostitutes whom they call "Creatures made to soften the Cares of Life." All the People that are rich have them in Pay; and they who belong to Farmers-general, or Undertakers, are the happiest, they squeeze considerable Sums from their fat Lovers, and share in the Spoils of the Widow and the Orphan. Those who have Men of Quality for Lovers, spend commonly what they get; for twenty Years perhaps they live at Rack and Manger, are coach'd about Town in a handsome Chariot, with Liveries proportionable.

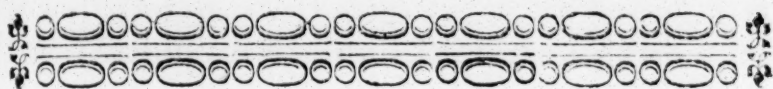
But when the Wrinkles cease the Face,  
 Poor Punk is cashir'd by his Grace,  
 And blooming *Peg* put in her Place.

THE Clergy act more handsomely and conscientiously with their discarded Misses, for they generally allow them a small Matter to keep Soul and Body together: Whether this Generosity does not rather proceed from a Regard to their own Characters, and to prevent Clamours, than from a Principle of Generosity, or Gratitude for past Services, I won't pretend to determine.

FAREWELL, my dear *Brito*, may thou prosper in thy worldly Concerns; and may it be thy Fate to get a Wife chaste and faithful, the Glory of *Israel*, and from whom may spring that Lamp which is to illuminate Nations.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

LETTER



## L E T T E R L I.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS.

I'M under the greatest Impatience to hear from thee, and till I have that Pleasure I can't be easy. I shall not receive the Books from *Holland* but in six Weeks, nor can I send them till I hear of thy Arrival in *Egypt*. By the Letters which I have received from *Moses Rodrigo*, I see that he has been at great Pains to chuse the very best that could be found on History, and I'm hopeful they'll give thee great Satisfaction: I look upon good Books of that Kind as inestimable Treasures; their Scarcity augments their Value, and ten Ages scarce produce four or five Historians who attain to Perfection.

I TOLD thee in some of my former Letters with what Obscurities ancient History was clouded, and what Difficulty there was to discover Truth in those remote Ages: Come we nearer to our own Times we meet with another Difficulty nothing inferior; the vast Number of Historians, and the Want of Knowledge and Capacity in most of them, throw the Mind into Confusion, and are very hurtful to that Exactness which we are to endeavour, in order to the right placing of Facts, with a View to make, as it were, a Collection of them in our Minds, and to make the proper Use of them upon Occasion, by the Assistance of Memory. A confused Collection of a thousand useless Things, with which Historians stuff their

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Works,

Works, enervates the Reader's Understanding; and the Multitude of Facts, either false, or of little or no Use, carries off the Attention which ought not to be taken up but with Matters of Importance.

THE ancient *Greek* and *Latin* Historians, which are transmitted down to our Days, have been refined by Time; when I say refin'd, I don't mean their Works, of which we're so unlucky as to have lost considerable Pieces, but only that they alone have reach'd us without being condemn'd to Death or Oblivion, the Fate of many of their Co-temporaries; for all Ages have been pestered with bad Authors, whose Writings have never been handed down to Posterity; so see we that the Works which we have now remaining were esteem'd above all others in *Athens* and in ancient *Rome*.

THE Reason of a good Book's being preserved, preferably to an ordinary or a bad one, is so obvious, that it needs not strong Arguments to evince it: We're as careful about preserving what is valuable, as we're indifferent about what we despise. The *Greek* and *Roman* Historians are precious Deposits, which twenty Centuries have handed down to us, and which we are to transmit, with the same Care, to Posterity.

A THOUSAND Years hence our Successors will have none but our best Historians; Snuff-shops, Butter-women, and Dust, will prevent the bad ones from being a Plague to Posterity, at the same time that they'll revenge the present Age against those *Grub-street* Performances. The illustrious *De Thou* will reach the most distant Times: *Mezerai*, and some other Historians, tho' less perfect than the former, will be esteem'd by After-Ages: But how many Authors will perish one after another? And how many are there already, who, poor Abortives, are dead the very Moment of their Birth? What Num-

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bers have been stifled in the Cradle? Alas! who at this present Time can safely say that he knows a hundred Books composed only twenty Years since? What Mortal is there who (if he has but the least Regard to good Taste, and to guard his Mind against pompous Trifles, amplified with many *useless Nothings*) dares to read the pretended *History of the seven wise Men*, by *Larrey*, augmented with the Remarks of another Author, yet worse than the Body of the Work, and which have no other Merit, but that they're as short as useless? The *History of Louis XIV.* and that of *William III.*\*, written by the same Author, are also come to their End: Our Successors will not be put to the Drudgery of reconciling this Author to himself, who alternately makes those two Monarchs Heroes, and but very ordinary Princes. In the *History of Louis XIV.* *William III.* is but a very so so Man; and in the *History of the latter*, *Louis XIV.* becomes a Hero of such an obscure Merit, that we can scarce know him; our Successors, I say, will inform themselves of the Actions of those Monarchs, who were really great Men, in the Works of some good Author, who will keep up to the Decency due to History, and to the Respect which Truth requires.

I DON'T pretend, my dear *Isaac*, to give thee a particular List of all the Books that we daily see coming into the World, and going out of it, of which Number are these; *History of the Negotiations of the Peace of Mimeguen*; a Work of an insipid Stile, without Order and Conduct, a Series of low Politicks, and Facts told over and over: The *Present State of the United Provinces*; a poor, untimely, imperfect Child, which owes its precipitate Birth to the Desire that the Author had of being before-hand with another, who was

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\* *The History of England.*

at work upon the same Subject: *History of Poland under the Reign of Augustus II.* insipid Collection of *Gazettes*, augmented and enlarged with a tedious Collection of Pieces; a Work of which the low and creeping Stile perfectly agrees with the Author's loose and disorderly Manner of disposing the Facts.

THERE'S a great many other Books of this Kind, but their Demand is so small, that they do but little Harm to Literature and to Sciences: But it's not so with Respect to the Works of certain Authors, very dangerous for corrupting the Taste, and pernicious in the Republick of Letters. They have a beautiful Out-side, and seem to be supported on a glorious Foundation, on which nevertheless there's nothing good rear'd up. Those Writers are the *Continuators* of Works begun by some illustrious Men: Under the Shadow of those first Authors they impose upon the Publick, and sponge, if I may use the Expression, a Reputation which by no means belongs to them: But this is of short Duration; when their Works are carefully consider'd, and these new Tomes compared with the first, they're soon look'd upon as Bastards laying Claim to the Name of a Father, who never begat them: Such are the *Continuators* of *Josephus*, *Grotius*, *Mezerai*, *Puffendorff*, *Bossuet*, *Rapin-Thoiras*, and several others.

THE Credit which good Books have acquired in the Publick, would discourage those who continue them, did they but consider how dangerous Rivals they have, to whom they must give a constant Attendance: An ordinary Diamond is eclips'd by a Brilliant, it displays a greater Brightness when alone, and seems to be less imperfect: *The Continuation of the Ecclesiastical History by Fleuri* would be an accomplished Piece, were it not darkened by the Beauty of the first Work; the last Volumes of

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*Don Quixote* would please well enough had they not been preceded by the first.

To continue a Work, a Man must have a stronger Imagination, and a more lively Genius, than the first Author, who had no more to do but to follow his Ideas in a plain and natural Manner, whereas the other is tied down and confin'd to the Pattern set before him; his Imagination must trace the Foot-steps of the Person whose Work he continues, or else it will appear to be made of two different Pieces, not at all resembling one another.

THE great Number of ordinary and bad Writers are a mighty Hindrance to our Progress in the Study of History; the first Care of those who apply to it should be a proper Choice of Books, in order to be truly inform'd of Facts; they must be mistrustful of partial Authors, of those who have not had an Opportunity of knowing exactly the Matter which they treated, and of those who have not wrote but for sordid Gain: If we restrict ourselves to Historians who are not tax'd with such Faults, 'tis true, we'll have but a small Number to peruse, but we shall learn more in that few than in the immense Collection of others, and be assured that the Facts, regularly set in Order, are conformable to the strictest Truth.

To learn History in an Author devoted to a Party, is to judge of a Law-suit by the Pleadings of the Counsellor for one of the Parties: To read an ignorant Historian, or who is but indifferently informed in what he writes, to chuse him for our Conductor in finding out the Truth of Facts which we want to be informed of, is to give the Preference to a blind Man as our Leader in a dark Road; to found our Belief on the Authority of an Author hired to write, is to seek Truth in a Panegyrick.

THE famous *Gregorio Leti* pretended, after *Machiavel*, that an Historian ought neither to have *Religion nor Country*; but I think he had done better to have said neither *Country nor Purse*; for as to *Religion*, besides the Impiety of such a Sentiment, it lays us under no Constraint of disguising Truth. *De Thou* was a *Nazarene* Papist, and is as much esteemed by Protestants as those of his own Communion: I know very well that in all Religions there are many extravagant People who can't bear that we should blame the Faults of those who are of their Faith, nor extol the Virtues of those whom they think in an Error; but an Historian writes not for Persons so full of Prejudice and Weakness, vile Slaves to their false Devotion; let them remain Dupes to Priestcraft, and completely fill their Minds with Chimeras extracted from the Books of Monks and *Italian* Prelates; they'll find in these Works a Series of Invectives against illustrious Persons, who, while they lived, deserved the Esteem of the whole Universe.

THE most of the *Nazarene* Papist Writers are subject to be led away by their Passions, and to defame all who oppose them, without regard to Truth; they think themselves authorised by some of their ancient Doctors, whom they call *Fathers*: Those People launched out into Invectives against all who were not of their Opinion, neither respecting Merit nor Rank, all was equal to them: If Credit had been given to their Works they would have transmitted to Posterity *Julian*, whom they called Apostate, as a horrible Monster, tho' he had no other Fault but that of abandoning their Religion\*: That Prince was chaste, moderate, just, and

\* None has cleared *Julian* better of the Calumnies of the Fathers than *La Mothe-le-vayer*. "Don't we know," says he in a certain Part of his Encomiums on this Prince, "that the  
" great



and as brave and eloquent as *Cæsar*. Judge by this what Certainty the *Nazarenes* ought to have of past Transactions, particularly of those in which their Religion was concerned.

THERE'S still another Sort of Books, pernicious in the Study of History, which give but obscure Ideas, of no Use for our Instruction. The Reading of such Books is so much lost Time, which might be better employed, they ordinarily give to such Writings remarkable Titles, which are all that's good in them; in this Class may be rank'd a Book, of which I have just now finished the Reading, *viz. Introduction to the History of Asia, Africa, and America*, by Bruzen la Martiniere, a Collection of Facts known to every body, and confusedly placed; a Work in which there's nothing well digested, nothing new, nothing truly instructive, and, to finish the Character, writ in a weak and flagging Stile: At first Sight the Reader is struck with the Title, but 'twas scarce worth while to take the Hint from *Puffendorff* to make so bad use of it.

ADIEU, my dear *Isaac*; let me hear from thee; and may thy Prosperity exceed thy Wishes.

*Paris*, \*\*\*\*\*

## LETTER

“ great Applause with which — *Jovian* was received by the  
 “ Soldiery, when they demanded him for Emperor, proceeded  
 “ only from the Resemblance of Names? Now, it's certain  
 “ that a good Part of the Soldiers were Christians, of which  
 “ their electing a Prince of our Religion is a sufficient  
 “ Proof; from whence then could proceed such a Testimo-  
 “ ny of Affection to the Memory of an Idolater, a Persecu-  
 “ ter of the Faithful, if we don't attribute it to those royal  
 “ and shining Virtues that rendered him lovely and praise-  
 “ worthy?” *La Mothe-le-vayer on the Virtue of the Pagans, of his*  
*Works Tom. I. Pag. 696. Folio Edition.*



## LETTER LII.

JACOB BRITO to AARON MONCECA.

I MAKE it my constant Study to be instructed in the Manners of different People, and I compare, with great Pleasure, the Genius's and Customs of the different Nations which I visit. The *Venetians* are not as the rest of the *Italians*, superstitiously devoted to the Sentiments of the Monks and Priests; they make use of their Reason, and, improving the Light of Nature which Heaven has bestowed on them to direct their Conduct, their Minds are not enslaved by Bigotry, which renders Men soft and effeminate. I have observed in my Travels through *Italy*, that the People are more or less timorous and degenerate, as they're more or less subjected to Monks, whose mean and slavish Ideas abase the Hearts of those who imitate them, or keep their Company.

THIS Reflection leads me to a second upon the *Nazarene* Religion: There's no disputing but that many who profess it are courageous and valiant, and yet it seems only proper to make Cowards; their Doctors inspire them with the Contempt of Injuries and of Poverty; they even order them to love their Enemies, and those who persecute them: These Precepts are directly contrary to the Ideas of Honour, which requires to a publick Affront a signal Revenge.

IF *Julius Caesar*, in place of the *Roman* Legions, had got two hundred thousand Men, who had made it their Morning's Work to tell over their

their Beads, and the Afternoon's to read their Vespers, and who had bore all Injuries with the Patience and Tranquility of a Stoick, or a *Nazarene* (as they say themselves) I doubt much if that *Roman* had ever conquered a single Village of the *Gauls*, all that he could have expected from such devout Soldiers, was the Defence of their Country and of their God, for whom they would have dared Death: But there's more than this requisite to make good Troops; to acquire Reputation in the Business of War, we must do all the Mischief we can to the Enemy; such as, *preventing, surprising, putting all to the Sword, burning their Magazines, pillaging and starving them*; all these Actions are to be gone about with such Expedition, that there's no Time for consulting Casuists to know if it's fit, upon any such Occasion, to kill or to burn. An Army would make no great Progress, if, before a Council of War was to deliberate on giving Battle, the supreme Council of Divines was to be assembled to determine, Whether the Case was lawful or not, and if we were to go to the Enemy, or to avoid them? Were I a General, I should rather chuse to consult the Entrails of Victims, or the sacred Birds, according to the Custom of the Ancients; the worst that could happen would be, in Imitation of an illustrious *Roman*, to drown them, if they refused to eat, that they might drink more at their ease, and that the Augury might be the more favourable\*: But Divines would not be so easily managed as Birds; a thousand endless Disputes would start up amongst them, and the devout Army would be ten Times beat before they had settled even the Preliminaries of the Case of Conscience in debate. The Marshal *Biron* would certainly have refused the Command

\* Augur, Soothsayer, or Diviner, he that foretold Futurities by the flying, singing, or feeding of Birds.

mand of such an Army, he, who broke a Captain for no other Fault but that he used too great Precautions against the Prosecutions of the Solicitor-General: "Are you of those People, said he, who "are so afraid of Justice? you shall never serve "me more; for a Soldier that fears a Pen must "be afraid of a Sword." What would this Duke have done, think'st thou, to a Soldier, or an Officer, who had ask'd Permission to consult with his Director before he took the Field? for my part I'm persuaded he would have treated him as a sacred Bird.

THE *Nazarenes* themselves agree that their Conduct and Actions, in time of War, are intirely contrary to the Spirit of their Religion; but they throw the Evils that are committed on those who govern the States, and who ought not to engage the People but in just Wars; this first Principle laid down, they get over all other Scruples, and rob, kill, and burn, &c. without so much as consulting the Chaplains in their Armies as numerous as the *Sutlers*; for the Monks have some small Credit even with the Soldiers; they're so artful that they draw Advantages from the very People that esteem them least: But they have no manner of Authority at *Venice*; the Senate, jealous of its Power, would sacrifice all the Monks in the Universe if they pretended to cabal and to form Parties, and the least Step this way would be enough to hang the Superior of the most noted Convent of *Venice*: Let him only but talk a little freely of the Government, and his Business is quickly done. In this Country, People must be as reserved, with respect to the Ministry, as they may be free with others, and it's almost as dangerous to praise as to blame them. The *Venetians* are against Peoples speaking either one way or other of their Government; all Enquiries into that are odious, and they



are for Peoples looking upon it as the *Athenians* did upon the unknown God, to whom they had erected an Altar \*, and whom they silently honoured without speaking of his Qualities or Attributes.

A *GENOESE* Sculpter being at Work in a Church belonging to the Jesuits, who had caused him to come to *Venice* upon that Account; two *Frenchmen*, Strangers, going one Day to see his Work, after some Encomiums on the Beauty of it, fell insensibly into Discourse with him on the Government of the Republick: These *Frenchmen*, according to the laudable Custom among them of condemning every thing in foreign Countries, launch'd out into Invectives against the Senate and the Republick; the Title of Pantaloons, or Buffoons, was several Times bestowed upon the Senators; the honest Sculpter stood stiffly up for the *Venetians*, but his Adversaries were two to one, and gave no Quarter.

THE next Day, after this Conversation, the Council of State sent for the poor *Genoese*, who shook from Head to Foot when he appeared before the Senators, intirely ignorant for what he was accused, and little dreaming of the *Frenchmen* that he had seen the Day before. When he entered the Council-Hall, he was asked if he would know the Persons again with whom he had conversed on the Government of the Republick? This Question augmented his Fright, and he answered, trembling, That he was sure he had said nothing to the Disadvantage of the Republick: He was then ordered to go into another Chamber, where he immediately saw the *Frenchmen* hung up and dead, upon which he thought his last Hour was come: Being carried back to the Hall, the President told him gravely, " Another time, Friend,  
" hold

\* *Deo ignoto.*

“hold your Peace, our Republick has occasion  
“for no such Protectors as you;” upon which  
he was dismissed. The poor Man, almost frighten’d  
out of his Wits with what he had seen, left *Venice*  
directly, without bidding adieu to the Monks  
for whom he was working, and made a solemn  
Oath that they should never catch him there again.

IF the Inquisition of State be so terrible in this  
Country, that of the Church has no Power; this  
Tribunal, which the *Nazarenes* term *Holy Office*,  
is composed of the Father Inquisitor, the Pope’s  
Nuncio, Resident at *Venice*, the Patriarch of the  
City, a noble *Venetian*, and of two other Nobles  
chosen among the principal Senators, without the  
Presence of whom nothing that’s done is of any  
Force or Validity. The Estates of those who are  
condemned by the Inquisition go to their Heirs,  
so that the Monks at *Venice* can neither tyrannize  
over the People, nor usurp their Effects. The  
Books, whatever way they’re writ, or whatever  
Subject they treat of, are no ways liable to the  
Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; the Civil Government  
reserves wholly to itself the Cognisance of what  
regards the Press, and therefore every one is at  
Liberty to publish what he thinks proper at *Venice*,  
provided he keeps clear of the Republick. The  
principal Books of all Religions have been printed  
in this City; the *Jews* have made a new Edition  
of their *Talmud*: *Leon* of *Modena* and several others  
have here published their Works, and even the  
*Turks* have had their *Alcoran* printed at *Venice*;  
but what is most surprising, we see Books printed  
here against the Monks, Priests, and Sovereign  
Pontives\*, not only authoris’d by the Magistrates,  
but even received with Applause.

THE *Venetians* make their Religion subservient  
to their Politicks, and adapt their Faith to the  
Good

\* *History of the Council of Trente, by Fra. Paolo, &c.*

Good of the State, according to Times and Circumstances. They permit the University of *Padua* to give the Doctor's Cap, without obliging those, who receive the Degrees, to make the Profession of Faith order'd by the Pontives; so that the Body of *Venetian* Doctors is composed of *Nazarene* Papists, *Nazarene* Schismatics, *Nazarene* Hereticks, *Jews*, and even *Turks*, if a *Cadis* at *Constantinople* should take it in's Head to have the Cap. 'Tis the Opinion of the Republick, that the Path which leads to Science ought to be free to all Men; and that it's barbarous to exclude them from it, under the vain Pretext of Religion, which ought not to exempt us of the Ties necessary for the Tranquility and Good of Society.

THE *Venetians* are so attentive to procure the Conveniencies of Life to all Mankind in general, that they're provident, even to a Fault, in what they think may be useful to them. Some Years ago the Number of Curtezans being much diminish'd, the Republick caused Strangers to be brought. *Doglioni*, who has wrote on the remarkable Things of *Venice*, highly extols the Prudence of the Senate, who, in providing for the Necessities of human Weakness, have secured the Honour of chaste and modest Women, against whose Virtue thousands of Traps would have been laid. 'Tis impossible that the Care of Magistrates for the publick Good can be more extended than even to think of Means to satisfy the Desires of Debauchees and Rakes, and to dissipate the Fears of jealous Husbands: None but *Venetians* are capable of such Foresight and Exactness: But, with *Doglioni's* Leave, I think this Action deserves not the Encomiums which he has been pleased to bestow upon it: To prevent the Insults which honest Women might have been expos'd to from lewd Men, I think they had done better to imi-

tate the Example of *Sixtus-quintus*, when he banish'd the Curtezans from *Rome*. This Pontife punish'd Vice with the utmost Severity, so that Fear restrain'd the Excesses of Libertines and Ramblers; but the *Venetians* have milder Maxims, and imitate certain *German* Prelates, who, in former Times, permitted the Priests and Monks of their Dioceses to have Concubines, upon Condition that they should pay a certain yearly Tribute\*: The Republick does the same, and from the Sins of the Curtezans draw yearly into the publick Treasure above a hundred thousand Zechins.

ADIEU, my dear *Monceca*, may Prosperity attend all thy Undertakings.

*Venice*, \*\*\*\*\*.

\* See the *Centum gravamina*, apud *Wolffium*, *Lectiunum Memorabil.* Vol. II. Pag. 223.



## LETTER LIII.

ISAAC ONIS, formerly *Rabby*, now *Caraite*, to  
AARON MONCECA.

ABOUT eight Days ago, my dear *Monceca*, I took an eternal Leave of the Imperial City; and, Thanks be ascrib'd to the God of our Fathers, got clear off, without any bad Accident. My ancient Brethren were ignorant of the Cause of my Departure, having made them believe, that I was going to *Smyrna* about Business, where I'm happily arriv'd, and from whence I design to go soon for *Cairo*.

My Residence in the Imperial City not being so agreeable as thou'lt perhaps imagine, I left it  
without



without the least Concern; a thousand disagreeable Objects daily presented themselves, and I could make but little Use of my Philosophy in a Country where Vice, Rebellion, Murder, Avarice, and Cruelty, were constantly staring me in the Face. I can compare the *Ottoman* Empire to nothing better than a Shambles, and the Sultans and Vizirs to Butchers, who sacrificed to their lascivious Appetites Persons of all Ranks, and of all Ages. The despotick Power with which the Grand Signiors are cloath'd, and that which they give to their Vizirs, are the Sources of crying Sins and Injustices. The *Ottoman* Court resembles the Tribunal of the Inquisition; to be rich or virtuous, is to be criminal with it; every Thing in the Seraglio inspires Fear and Terror; Death is always at the Heels of those who approach the Sultans, and it would seem that those Princes rais'd them with no other View, but to make their Fall the more remarkable.

THE Entry to the Palaces of Sovereigns is commonly adorn'd with Marble-Pillars, and with Pieces of Sculpture worthy of Royal Grandeur; but the Gates of the Seraglio present us with nothing but the Heads of two or three hundred Bashaws, nail'd on them; and it's impossible to enter this fatal Palace without being struck with Horror at the unhappy Fate of so many misfortunate Persons. The Interior is no less doleful than the Exterior; all are fill'd with Dread and Terror; Innocency is no Security against Tortures and Death; and in the Seraglio one may say, when he rises in the Morning, 'tis a great Chance if he shall see the End of that Day; the minutest Fault, the smallest Inadvertency, are attended with fatal Consequences.

THE Imperial City is of a Piece with the Court; People are constantly alarm'd with the News of

the Banishment, or Death, of the most considerable Citizens: Every new Vizir, on his being promoted, sacrifices a certain Number of Victims to his Avarice: *Constantinople* is a Sort of Sheep-fold, where Flocks are fed, of which, from Time to Time, the fattest are kill'd. The *Jews* and *Greeks* are the most exposed to those Outrages; they dearly buy the Privilege of exercising their Religion, are often sadly squeeze'd, and cruelly robb'd of the Fruits of their Labour. Our unfortunate Nation is under perpetual Vexations at *Constantinople*. In Times of Peace and Tranquility we're a Prey to the Avidity of the Ministry, and, during Seditions, exposed to the Fury of an insolent Soldiery, whose insatiable Cupidity is often glutted with our Riches. Tho' it would seem that we enjoy'd more Liberty in the *Mahometan* than in the *Nazarene* Countries, yet, in the former, we're more exposed to Persecution, and, at least, as much hated.

I know not if thou'rt inform'd of the Outrages which the *Persians* committed on our Nation about a hundred and fifty Years since: The *Muftis* of *Ispahan*, envious of the Riches which the *Jews* of that City had acquir'd, presented a Memorial to the *Sophi Schah Abbas*, praying, that he would cause to execute the Orders and Precepts contained in the *Alcoran*, of which one of the most essential related to the Conversion of the *Jews*, "who, five hundred Years after the Publication of *Mahomet's* Religion, ought to turn *Musselmen*, or be entirely destroyed." The *Sophy*, extremely bigotted to his Religion, but who would not however imbrue his Hands with innocent Blood, sent for the *Jews* and interrogated them on their Opinion of *Mahomet*. Judge, my dear *Monceca*, how much such a Question ought to puzzle our Brethren: They saw through the  
Design

Design of this Interrogatory, which was nothing else but to convict them of Blasphemy against the false Prophet, and to serve as a specious Pretext for their Ruin and Destruction. After consulting some Time together, they resolved to soften their Answer as much as possible, and told the Sophi, that tho' their Religion did not permit them to believe in any other Prophet but *Moses*, yet they did not think that *Mahomet* was a false Prophet, being descended of *Ismael*, *Abraham's* Son; and that they desired to remain his Majesty's most faithful Subjects and Slaves. This Scene terminated in two Millions of Gold, which the unhappy *Jews* were obliged to give; and, as a Means to facilitate an After-game of the same Kind, they were order'd to condescend on the Time when their *Messiah* should come. Their Answer to this Question, as pinching as the former, was that their Deliverer might appear To-morrow, the Day after, or at any Time. "Well, said the Sophi, I give you seventy Years, and I'll order your Answer to be enter'd in the publick Records of the Empire, to the End that, if you are Impostors, and that your *Messiah* does not appear betwixt and that Time, you may be banish'd out of this Kingdom by my Successor on the Throne, at the Expiration of the said seventy Years." This fatal Decree was actually put in Execution in the Reign of *Schah Abas II.* who caus'd a Declaration to be publish'd, ordering "All his Subjects, and Strangers who lived amongst them, to hunt the *Jews* as wild Beasts, to put all to the Sword, Men, Women, and Children; to seize on their Effects, and to spare none but those who turn'd *Mahometans*." That cruel Persecution lasted near to three Years, and ended only in the Death of a Part of our Brethren, and in the Flight of others to the *Indies* and *Mogul's* Country.

Country. 'Tis pretended that Letters from *Constantinople*, mentioning the Arrival of the *Messiah*, gave Occasion to the bloody Proscription.

THIS *Messiah* was the notorious Impostor *Sabatai Sevi*, who has thrown a Blot upon our Nation, by their giving Credit to his Lies. There's still *Jews* at *Smyrna* who have seen this Cheat. He made Choice of that City for the Theatre of his Impostures; and 'twas there he acquired a Reputation that reach'd to the utmost Limits of the Earth, and, by its Extensiveness, became the more pernicious to us.

Since my Arrival here, I have been told very singular Things of *Sabatai Sevi*; he was born at *Smyrna*; his Father was call'd *Mordecai*, a Man unhealthful, constantly labouring under Distempers; but he, on the contrary, vigorous, well shaped, as to his Person, somewhat grim-faced, with curling Hair, and Whiskers cock'd up; he led a very austere Life, rigorously observing the Law of *Moses*, in which he was thoroughly versed, as well as in the Secrets of the *Talmud*: He might be about the Age of forty when he took it into his Head to publish that he was the *Messiah*: His Retinue was composed of five or six Rabbies, by way of Disciples, of whom *Nathan Benjamen* was one of the most remarkable and most esteemed: This *Jew* passed for a Man of Knowledge and Virtue, and of great Humility.

THE Impostor had soon a great many Followers who, on his Word, believed that he was really the illustrious Protector come for the Deliverance of our captive Nation: Men being always apt to chime in with what flatters them, and to follow their first Ideas; the *Jews* dispersed through the four Parts of the World were almost all in Motion, and preparing to range themselves under the Banner of a Traytor who dishonoured our Nation.

In



In *Persia*, on the Side of *Susa*, there were already above eight thousand *Jews* assembled, and about a hundred thousand in *Barbary*, and the Deserts of *Tafileta*, resolved to acknowledge him for their King and Prophet. This Contagion, or Spirit of Giddiness, had not less seized on those who live in the most remote Countries; a great many *Jews*, scattered all over the *North*, and in *Holland*, sold their Houses to go to the *Levant*, and there live under the Government of this new Sovereign. The *Nazarenes*, whose Discourse is generally dictated by Hatred, pretend that the *Jews* of *Amsterdam* had already drawn up a Petition to *Sebatai Sevi*, praying that they might have a Patent for being the only Pawnbrokers at *Jerusalem*: 'Tis true, the *Portuguese Jews* had had several Meetings to concert on Measures for the Ratification of their ancient Privileges, and had resolved to depute one of their Number to *Smyrna* to obtain Permission of our new Deliverer to join, for the future, the *Don* to their Names, as they had formerly done in *Portugal*; and that in *Judea* they should be called *Don Moses*, *Don Jacob*, &c. they also intended to remonstrate that they were intitled to a distinguished Rank and separate Place in the Temple, not being accustomed to go into the Synagogues of *German Jews* who were nothing but beggarly *Smaus*; but what they had most at Heart was to obtain some honourable Titles for the principal Men amongst them, which they offered to purchase at as dear a Rate as they usually pay to *Nazarene* Princes who want Money.

IN the meantime, Heaven took pity of the Blindness of our Nation, by unmasking and manifestly exposing the Cheat. *Sabatai Sevi* declared to the *Jews* at *Smyrna*, that he intended to go to *Constantinople* to insist upon the Grand Signior's repairing the Temple of *Jerusalem*. He embark'd in a  
*Turkish*

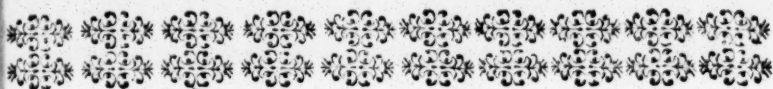
*Turkish* Saïque, and there were not a few mad enough to imagine that the Moment he was on board, the Saïque dissappeared; but this false Prophet had no Power over the Elements, particularly the Winds, which were always contrary to him, so that it was six Weeks before he reached the *Dardanelles*, where he was taken up by order of the Grand Vizir, who had heard of his Impostures, and wanted to be more fully informed about them. This Cheat was shut up in one of the *European* Castles, and the Vizir being obliged to depart for the Expedition of *Candia*, the Seducer of our Nation remained in Prison. Many *Jews*, still persuaded that he was the *Messiah*, flock'd from all Quarters to see him, and his Guards drew considerable Sums of Money from those who were admitted into his Presence. The Reputation of this Impostor made at last so much Noise that the Grand Signior ordered him to be brought to *Constantinople*, and introduced into the Seraglio. "I'll directly know if thou'rt the *Messiah*," said this Prince, chuse whether thou'lt be tied to a Stake, "as a Mark to my Cross-bow Men, or turn *Turk*." The pitiful *Sabātai Sevi* was in no Quandary if he should save his Life at the Expence of his Religion, but directly took the Turban, and the Grand Signior gave him his Life and Liberty to mortify our Nation, which was long the Laughter of the *Ottoman* Empire, and of the whole Universe.

LET us be still upon our Guard, my dear *Monceca*, against Reports which wicked and designing Men artfully spread about: Nothing is more certain than that, when the happy Time of our Deliverance shall come, the Miracles will be evident, and the whole World convinced of their Reality.

— Adieu.

*Smyrna*, \*\*\*\*\*.

LETTER



## LETTER LIV.

AARON MONCECA to ISAAC ONIS, formerly *Rabby*, now *Caraite*.

I ASSISTED Yesterday at a great many *Nazarene* Ceremonies which I had not till then seen. The *Chevalier de Maisin*, to whom I have daily new Obligations, desired I would accompany him to a Relation's House who had been ill for some time, and was now at the last Extremity. The Physicians had given him but twenty-four Hours, at furthest, to live; and the Moment they pronounce such a Sentence in *France*, all the nearest of Kin come to the dying Person's House to help him out of this World with as little Trouble as possible, and to furnish him with Pass-ports and other necessary Supplies for the Journey that he's going to undertake.

WERE we to take Notice of all the *Nazarene* Customs, during the Course of a Fit of Sickness, a Volume of Reflections might be made upon them: The Moment a Man is taken with a Fever, or any other Distemper, that endangers his Life, his Heir, who ordinarily only waits for the happy Moment of seeing him expire, puts on, notwithstanding his inward Joy and Satisfaction, a sad and mournful Countenance, Despair appears in his Looks, and one would think that he could not survive the sick Person, who is directly put into the Hands of a Physician. The Disciple of *Galen* takes his Hand, gravely feels his Pulse, coughs and spits before he gives his Opinion, and after  
this

this Prelude, tells us, in *Greek*, the Name of the Distemper; and, as *Hippocrates* says, that "Life is short, Experiments dangerous, and Knowledge hard to be attained \*." The modern Doctor requires a Consultation of three Physicians, that they may with the more Certainty judge of the Name and Seat of the Disease; and in the meantime prescribes some anodyne and deterfive Glisters to aid, assist, and prepare Nature; to scowr, wash, and refresh the Entrails; and to diminish, keep down, and dissipate the Vapours from flying up to the Brain: The Apothecary is then called, he, his Prentice, and Glisters-pipe Bearer; for it is not here as at *Constantinople* where the same Doctor prescribes, prepares, and gives the Medicines. In *France* every Imp of *Hippocrates* has his distinct and different Precinct; the Physician commands in chief; the Apothecary claims a Right to purge above and below; the Veins, Bones, and Muscles properly belong to Chirurgeons: Were a sick Person to die a hundred Times, none of them will meddle with what is foreign to their Function; a Physician, particularly, would be dishonoured, should he humble himself to the dirty Work of an Apothecary; and were he, tho' inadvertently, but to touch a Glisters-pipe, farewell Reputation: The very Apothecaries, for a certain Time, were unwilling to give Glisters, and caused their Men to perform those Operations; but the Physicians were offended at their assuming such Airs of Grandeur; they imagined that the Apothecaries intended to raise themselves above their ordinary Stations, and to encroach upon their Privileges; for which Reason, by a Decree of the Faculty, they were ordered to prepare and administrate Glisters themselves,

\* *Vita brevis, Experimentum periculosum, Judicium difficile.* The first of *Hippocrates's* Aphorisms, or general Propositions,



selves, without the Assistance of their Prentices, who were only to be By-standers\*.

A NAZARENE, under any Distemper, must undergo the whole Ceremonial prescrib'd by the Children of *Æsculapius* †, and resolve to die by Rule.

WHEN the Physicians, who are called to consult about the Origin and Cause of a Distemper, have given their Opinions, he, to whose Care the Recovery of the sick Person's Health is principally committed, returns Thanks to his Brethren, who are largely paid for their Advice; thereafter he remains sole Master of the Field of Battle, ordains, commands, and acts with unlimited Power, till the Distemper has reduced his Patient to Extremity; and then he shares his Authority with the Confessor. These Physicians of the Soul observe more

\* The Physicians at *Paris*, after long Contest, obtained a Decree prohibiting the Apothecaries from taking charge of sick Persons, and ordering them to give their Glisters themselves. *Renard* has lampoon'd the Doctors and Apothecaries on their Dispute in his Play, called, *The Legatee*; where Mr. *Cliftorel* speaks thus.

*Ils vouloient obliger tous nos Apoticairez  
A faire, & mettre en place, eux memes leurs Clisteres;  
Et que tous nos Garçons ne fussent qu' Assistans.  
Ma foi! ces Medecins sont de vilaines gens!  
Il m'auroit fait beau voir, aveque des Lunetes,  
Faire, en jeune Aprentif, ces fonctions Secretes.*

Thus paraphrased.

Must we submit to their unjust Commands,  
And hold the Glisters-pipe in our own Hands;  
While Prentices shall quietly stand by,  
A pox upon the Doctors Tricks — say I.  
'Tis fine that I must deck my Nose with Glasses,  
To peep in the Posteriors of young Lasses.

† So excellent a Physician that after his Death he was worshipped as a God. He was used to carry a Dog along with him for his Chirurgeon, and a Goat for his Apothecary; the one to lick Wounds and Ulcers whole; the other to cure Consumptions and inward Diseases with her Milk.

more Formalities than those of the Body; the Moment they are called, the sick Person must make an ample and sincere Confession of all the Actions of his Life, and when they judge that his Soul may have been stain'd by any of them, they cleanse and purify it by some conjuring Words mutter'd into his Ear, accompany'd with certain Gestures and Grimaces; and, this finish'd, the next Thing in Course is to ask him if he is not intended to bestow some pious Gifts on the Saints and Priests that minister at their Altars, to procure their Protection in the Journey that he's going to undertake. Few *Nazarenes* die without leaving in their Wills something to the Monks in the Neighbourhood to drink to their good Journey; and they would believe themselves damned if some religious Community, after their Death, were not to mumble some Anthems and Portions of Scripture in Behalf of their Souls.

WHEN the Confessor has made the necessary Provision for the spiritual Pastors, his next Care is towards the sick Person's Family and Relations, to whom Legacies are left, more or less, as he thinks proper, for the Power of a Director over a *Nazarene* at the Point of Death is unbounded, every thing's right that his Confessor orders, and he looks upon him as a tutelary Angel who is to conduct him by the Hand to the heavenly Mansion. In fine, when he is breathing out his last, a small Ceremony is performed, of which I can by no means find out the Meaning. A Priest, cloathed in a white Linnen-Frock, with a Piece of Stuff about his Neck three Inches broad, and hanging down on each Side to his Knees, brings a small Silver Urn, in which there's a gluish Oil, with this he rubs all the principal Members of the dying Person, then repeats a Prayer in *Latin*, which he understands nothing of, and, at last, orders the  
Soul

Soul to leave the Body quietly and peaceably ; this done, all the Company leave the Room with Tears in their Eyes, except a single Priest, who receives his last Sigh, and recites, while he's expiring, some *Latin* Prayers to the Honour of his Patron, whom he warns to be in Readiness to receive his Soul when it takes its Flight.

IF I did not know that the *Nazarenes* believe the Soul to be spiritual, I should be apt to think that the Reason of anointing with this Oil was to open the Pores of the Body, that the subtle Matter might the more easily get out and evaporate; but the *Nazarenes* believe that the Soul is a pure Spirit, a divine Puff, so I could by no Means account for the Cause of such a Custom; and indeed they have very many that I can as little comprehend; and though I sometimes imagine that I'm pretty well vers'd in their Manners and Customs, yet still some new Thing starts up that I'm intirely at a Loss about.

As I was passing t'other Day, about nine o'Clock at Night, by the Church of a Convent, I saw great Numbers of Women coming out; and, being curious to know what had brought them there at that Hour, I ask'd a Friend, who was along with me, the Meaning of it. "These Women, said he, come from the Retreat." What do you understand by coming from the Retreat, said I? "There are certain Convents of Monks, answered he, who order all the Women under their Direction to lay aside all worldly Concerns for fifteen or sixteen Days every Year. They assemble several times every Day to hear the Exhortations of the Director in Vogue, who is commonly the Chief of these pious Societies, which the Monks call Congregations; there are many Sorts of them, and for People of all Ranks: The Monks acquire great Credit by this Means, all these Associates being un-

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“ der intire Command of those who have the Di-  
 “ rection of their Conduct. This Custom, said  
 “ I, appears to be laudable, and the Reflections  
 “ that may be made during the fifteen Days Re-  
 “ treat, where the Mind is not diverted with  
 “ troublesome Ideas, cannot but be useful to-  
 “ wards a Reformation of Manners. You little  
 “ know, replied he, the Nature of those As-  
 “ semblies; they’re nothing but Parties of Plea-  
 “ sure, serving rather to animate, than to cool  
 “ Desires: A Woman in these exterior Devoti-  
 “ ons finds Means to augment the Number of  
 “ her Assignations; and she who at any other  
 “ Time could not perhaps see her Lover but in  
 “ an Afternoon, meets with him now every time  
 “ that she goes to the Congregation; and the La-  
 “ dies who are under Confinement by the Jea-  
 “ lousy of Husbands, take the Advantage of a  
 “ Time wherein they’re not to be suspected: The  
 “ Half of the Women that you have seen com-  
 “ ing out of this Church, have already forgot all  
 “ the Exhortations of the Day. What I tell you,  
 “ continued the *Nazarene*, my Friend, is literally  
 “ true; and I may safely add, that the frequent  
 “ pious Assemblies are most formidable Rocks,  
 “ upon which the Virtue of the Fair Sex often  
 “ splits.

“ WE have a Custom of sending Missionaries  
 “ to every Town in the Kingdom, to endeavour  
 “ the Reformation of the People, and to inspire  
 “ them with a Love to Virtue. A certain Bishop,  
 “ who made great Complaints against the married  
 “ and unmarried Women of his Diocese, and who  
 “ preached and tormented himself to no Purpose  
 “ against their Gallantries, resolved to have re-  
 “ course to more effectual Remedies, and there-  
 “ fore sent for four of the most famous Missiona-  
 “ ries: Their Exhortations soon produced won-  
 “ derful Effects; by four in the Morning the  
 “ Churches



“ Churches were crowded, and every one promised to mend their Manners, so that one would have thought the Inhabitants of this Bishop’s Diocese were become *Ninivites*, to whom a new *Jonas* preached Repentance. The young Girls and married Women were particularly assiduous in attending on the nightly Assemblies; and at Break of Day the Ladies of Quality, Citizens Wives, and Countrywomen, contended who should be first at Church. At last the Mission ended, and the pious Prelate thought that his Flock was for ever sanctified. The Departure of the Missionaries occasioned Floods of Tears, and particularly the young Women were inconsolable. The Preachers, mov’d with such tender Marks of Friendship, promis’d to return another Year; but the Bishop took Care not to send for them, for about the End of this, the Hospital was burthen’d with eight hundred Foundlings more than they usually had in former Years; and this Multiplication was the noble Effects of the Mission. The Fair Sex had made a good Use of the Liberty of going out in the Morning and at Night; the Gallants were not observ’d at a Time set a-part for Penitence; and Love, which never loses its Right, baffled all the Discourses of the good Missionaries, who probably went to another Town to serve the State to as good Purpose, and to repair the Prejudice which the Celibacy of Priests occasions.”

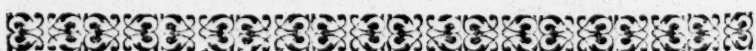
WHAT this *Nazarene* told me was diverting enough, but it gave me Pain to see how Men abuse the best and most useful Things to favour their Crimes. The *French* are not the only People with whom Religion serves as a Veil to Actions the most contrary to Piety. All Nations and all People, whatever be their Religion, make the most holy Customs and the best established Usages

subservient to the Depravation of their Manners. The Women in *Turky* ask Permission to go to the Mosques for no other Reason but to see their Lovers, and for that very Cause a good many *Turks* build Chapels in their Seraglio, and some of them, to abridge all Ceremonies, persuade the Women that their Souls are mortal, and that they have no Occasion to pray to God.

WHAT a melancholly thing is it, my dear *Isaac*, that the Corruptions of Men should not only hurry themselves to Perdition, but also involve others in their Ruin, whom they pretend to love and esteem: Sure a Man must be worse than a Brute who, to make himself easy upon the Score of Jealousy, absolves a Woman from paying that Adoration to the Supreme Being which is the Duty and Happiness of every rational Creature; the Justice of Heaven will certainly take an ample Satisfaction of that Wretch who persuades her she has no Soul, that he may be the only Possessor of her Body.

LET us, my Friend, detest such diabolical Maxims; and rather for ever deprive ourselves of the Female Sex than enjoy them upon any such Terms.

*Paris, \*\*\*\*\**



## LETTER LV.

AARON MONCECA to JACOB BRITO.

I KNOW not, my dear *Brito*, if the News from *Corfica* makes as much Noise at *Venice* as at *Paris*; but what's reported here appears very surprising, and very incredible, were there not evident Proofs of the Truth. Is there, really, any thing more extraordinary than to see a Stranger, from the Coast of *Africa*, arrive in an Island, and get himself

himself acknowledged as Sovereign by a People who receive him as their Deliverer? and that done in the Sight of all *Europe*, about forty or fifty Leagues from *France*, and less from *Italy*; without any of the *European* Powers appearing to be concerned, except the unfortunate *Genoese*, whose Situation seems to be not a little puzzling. Let who will run over the *Amadis* \*, I scarce think he can meet with so romantick an Adventure; and I'm not at all surpris'd now that *Sancho Pança* believed so firmly that he was King of an Island: I begin to discover that the thing was not impossible, if his Master † could have given him three thousand Pair of Shoes, four thousand Firelocks, and six Brass Cannon, for this is the Present which the new King of *Corfica* made his Subjects: He came to his new Empire in a Man of War carrying, 'tis assur'd, an *English* Flag; his Dress was very whimsical, being a Medley of the different Modes of all Nations; his Robe was *Turkish*, his Sword *Spanish*, his Periwig *English*, his Hat *German*, and his Cane à bec-de-Corbin ‡, such as *French* Beaux have. There must be some particular Reason for such an extravagant Sortment; perhaps his Dress is the Emblem of his Dignities, for he takes the Titles of *Spanish* Grandee, *English* Lord, *French* Peer, *German* Baron, and *Roman* Prince; his *Spanish* Sword is for the Golden Fleece, his *English* Periwig for the Garter, his Cane, à bec-de-Corbin, for the Blue Ribbon, his great *German* Hat designs his Quality as Baron of the Empire, and his long scarlet Robe denotes the Diminutive of a Cardinal, or, if you will, of a *Roman* Prince. Notwithstanding the Jokes of the Publick on the Lord *Theodore* I. King of *Corfica*, of new Creation, since his Arrival in this Country he has reduced the *Genoese* to a State which makes

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them

\* A French Romance. † Don Quixote. ‡ A crooked or gibby-headed Cane,

them not a little apprehensive of the Event; he has made himself Master of the advantageous Post of *Porto-Vecchio*, and of the Town of *Sarsena*, in which he has found a considerable Quantity of Warlike Stores. If he goes on at this Rate he'll soon be in a Condition to lay Siege to *Bastia*, and to take the capital City of the Island from his Enemies: What is most surprising in all the Actions and Proceedings of King *Theodore*, is his having Money at Command. Before his Arrival in *Corfica* a Poet might have sung,

*La Nature Marâtre, en ces affreux Climats,  
Produisoit, au lieu d'Or, du fer & des Soldats\*.*

Thus paraphrased:

No Gold is here, as in *Peruvian* Lands,  
But deadly Weapons in each Soldier's Hands.

THE Scene however is now changed, and there is not a *Corfican* Highlander who has not a Piece of Gold in his Pocket, either *Zechins*, *Mirlitons*, or *Lisbonians*, the current Coin, at present, of the Island. The honest Conjuror who protects our Knight-Errant lets him not want for Money, and is particularly careful of all his Affairs: All *Europe* is as much at a Loss now to know who this famous Magician is, as formerly about the Origin of Lord *Theodore*, whom some would have to be the Prince *Ragotski*, others the Duke of *Ripperda*, and founded their Opinions on the Report of his going thrice every Day to Mass: This Circumstance might have agreed well enough with the Bigotry of *Ragotski*, but it was ridiculous to imagine that *Ripperda* was become a good Christian at *Morocco*; if such a thing happened, I would advise the *French* to send thither the greatest Part of their Physicians and Sorbon Doctors.

BUT we are no longer in Doubts about the Name, Condition, and Quality of the new King  
of

\* *Crebillon* in his *Radamistus* and *Zenobia*.



of *Corfica*; every body agrees that his Majesty is the Baron *Newhoff*, a Native and Subject of *Prussia*, born in the County of *Mark*. The Curiosity of the Publick is now wholly turned on the powerful Magician his Protector; but what signifies it to beat our Brains about a thing so wrapt up in Darkneſs, Time only muſt diſcover the Myſtery, and unravel this extraordinary Adventure: The more it's examined, the more we're ſurpriſed at a thouſand Incidents which augment the Marvellous and Romantick of the whole Story. This Baron *Newhoff*, now King of *Corfica*, was, about a Year ſince, a Slave in *Algiers*; he himſelf has inform'd the Publick with this Circumſtance of his Life, in a Letter which he wrote to one of his Relations in *Germany*, ſince he arrived in his new Dominions. " You have not known, ſays he, the Miſfortune I had of being taken, laſt Year, and carried as a Slave to *Algiers*, from whence I found means to deliver myſelf by ſacrificing a conſiderable Sum of Money; but I muſt defer to another Time the telling you what I have acquired by divine Aſſiſtance."

Is it not pretty comical, my dear *Brito*, that the Slave of an *Algerine* will not owe his Grandeur but to divine Grace, and that he, who, about a Year ago, run the Risk of a Baſtinado for the ſmalleſt Fault, ſhould now with a pompous Emphaſis ſay, "*Theodore* I. by the Grace of God, King of *Corfica* and *Baſtia*. To our truſty and well-beloved Counſellors, Senators, and Judges of our Courts of Judicature, Preveditors, Bailiffs, and Senechals, &c. Greeting." Theſe are the Strokes of blind Fortune; ſhe often takes a Pleaſure in drawing a Man from a Dunghill, and raiſing him to the higheſt Dignities; and we often ſee a Man of the very Dregs of the People attain to eminent Employments; 'tis true we have few Examples of ſo great and ſo ſudden a Riſe, as  
that

that of Lord *Theodore*; yet should we trace Royalty to its first Source, we shall find that the Men, chosen and appointed to command others, had no greater or juster Rights over the People, than *Theodore* had over the *Corficans*: The Name of King would have been for ever unknown to Men, had not the Common Interest forc'd them to lodge the Power and Authority in one Person. The *Corficans*, turn'd desperate by the *Genoesse* Oppressions, had Recourse to a private Man to deliver them from the Tyranny; if he renders them free, and delivers them from Slavery, what matter is it to them from whence he sprang?

*Un Guerrier généreux, que la Vertu couronne,  
Vaut bien un Roi formé par le Secours des loix:  
Le premier que le fut n'eut pour lui que sa voix\*.*

Thus paraphrased.

The Hero, who for Virtue is renown'd,  
May vie with Kings, who by the Laws are  
crown'd;

Thus he who first ascended to a Throne,  
Ow'd all the Title to his Fame alone.

When we take a near View of the Conduct of the *Corficans*, the Ridicule of it disappears; they reward their Benefactor, and honour their Deliverer: Why should we make it a Crime in them to pay Homage to Virtue, and to shew their Gratitude? I begin to perceive, that they act very judiciously, and that good Sense and sound Politics direct all their Proceedings: With whatever Trust and Power their new Prince is vested, they have, nevertheless, bridled the monarchical Authority; and their Sovereign can neither impose Taxes, nor publish any new Law, without the Approbation of his grand Council, consisting of eighteen Senators, who represent the Estates of the Kingdom: The Lord *Theodore* has no

other

\* *Crebillon* in his *Semiramis*.

other Prerogatives but what the People granted to the first Sovereigns whom they chose \*; he commands the Armies, and administers Justice according to the Laws and Customs of the Country, not having it in his Power to change them, but by the Consent of the Nation; so that he may do a great deal of Good, but can do no Harm.

MAY they perish, my dear *Brito*, who maintain the pernicious Maxim, *That Men were made to be the Slaves of one single Person*: Nothing but Pride could have hatch'd an Opinion that violates all Laws, overturns the World, and even attacks the Divinity: Laws were made before Sovereigns, and therefore they must submit to them as well as their Subjects: A private Man who betrays his King and Country, is a Villain; but a Prince who violates the Laws, and contemns Justice, is unworthy of Command.

TYRANNY was unknown among Men till the Ambition of Courtiers deified the Vices of Sovereigns; so that the Corruption of bad Kings takes its Scource from the Crime of Subjects: The Flatterers tainted the Majesty of the Throne, and substituted, in the Place of true Grandeur banish'd from it, chimerical Honours founded on the Misery of Mankind.

PRINCES should be wholly employed about the Happiness of their People, whose Fathers they are, or, at least, ought so to be; before them, the Patriarchs, to whom they succeeded, were by Birth the Kings and Fathers of their Families; they govern'd them by the Laws of Nature, and this wise Government continued till Men grew wicked enough to have occasion for written Laws, and for a King; who, having the same Power as a Father of a Family, had less Tenderness, and less Inclination to pardon, so that Vice was the Foundation of Sovereignty.

HAD

\* *Eris dux in bello, et reddes nobis justitiam.*

HAD Men been always just, they had been always free, and would have had no Occasion for Chiefs, Judges, or Counsellors; but since Fear must now restrain them, and that, Slaves to their Passions, they are only virtuous from the Apprehension of Punishment, it is necessary, for the common Interest, that they vest one, or more Persons, with the Power, which they might otherwise have shared in general; but he, whom they acknowledge as their Sovereign, is obliged to submit himself to the Laws, since the Power he has is derived from these very Laws, commanding Men to honour and respect those whom we have set over us.

WHEN a Prince breaks through the Rules of Justice, what a sad Example does he lay before his Subjects? Does he not seem to speak this Language, "Faith, Oaths, and Customs the most sacred, are Ties that may be broke with Impunity? Imitate my Example, be neither good nor just, but where there's a Necessity for it to escape Punishment."

DON'T however imagine, my dear *Brito*, that I'm for limiting the supreme Authority; 'tis to render it more respectable that I would have Justice to accompany it. Is not Equity the Principle of true Grandeur? and a King wise, good, prudent, the Father of his People, and who governs them in Peace and Plenty, is he not more absolute over the Hearts than a Tyrant whom we serve out of Fear?

THOU'LT perhaps ask me how far the Fidelity of Subjects to their Kings ought to be extended? My Answer is, that they ought upon no Account to judge him whom God has appointed as their Judge, and that it only appertains to the Supreme Being to punish bad Kings. The People are to pray for their Conversion, but if Heaven hears not their Prayers, they cannot, without being



ing guilty of a most atrocious Crime, revolt against the Lord's Anointed.

GOD makes use of wicked Kings as of a Plague or Famine, and Tyrants are born for the Punishment of Mankind: We must bend under the Hand of God, who punishes or rewards us according to our Merits. The Reign of the *Caligulas* and *Neroes*, in *Rome*, was owing to the Divine Wrath, and the Excesses of these Monsters were a just Punishment on the *Romans* for their Crimes.

IT would be equally absurd to maintain that we may rebel against our Prince, as to excuse the ridiculous Behaviour of the *Chinese* towards their Gods, they honour and respect them while they're favourable, but the Moment they get not what is ask'd, they treat them with the utmost Contempt. "How, rascally Spirit, will they some times say, thou'rt lodg'd in a magnificent Temple, fed in Clover, all over gilded, and nicely perfumed, and thou refusest to grant us the Favours that we ask thee." With that they take a Whip and lash the Idol to some Purpose for ten or twelve Days successively. If they obtain, during that Time, what they were wanting, they make him several Excuses. "Why, Mr. Spirit, say they, are you so head-strong? 'tis true, we have been a little too forward, but, when all's done, are not you to blame for being so crabbed a God? Why do you take a Pleasure in being whipp'd? however, what's done is done, let's think no more on't; you shall be new gilded, a-new perfum'd, and plentifully feasted, provided you forget what's past\*."

A CHINESE, who had a most stubborn and fantastical Idol, nettled at the needless Expence which he had long been at for it, and unwilling to be bubbled by a God so malicious, sued him at Law before the supreme Council of *Pekin*; after

\* History of China, Tom. II. Pag. 223.

after several Sittings, in which the *Bronzes* defended the Idol all they could, the Idolater carried the Cause: The Court having duly considered the Merit of the Plaintiff's Claim, according to Justice condemn'd the Idol, as a Thing useleſs in the Kingdom, to perpetual Banishment, his Temple to be raz'd, and the *Bronzes* who attended on his Person, to rigorous Punishments; provided nevertheless, that they might make Application to the other Spirits of the Province, for Redress of what they had suffer'd on this Account \*.

HOWEVER ridiculous and impious it would be, to justify Actions so extravagant, it would be equally, if not more, criminal to maintain, that the People may, at Pleasure, and of their own Accord, do themselves Justice on those to whom the Almighty has committed the supreme Power, and of which they're only responsable to himself.

By the Laws Men are judged; by the Kings the Laws are put in Execution; and God alone is the Master of Sovereigns.

Let us, my dear *Brito*, respect those of them who are good, pray for the Bad, but never allow ourselves to be led away by a Spirit of Rebellion, whatever may be our Fate: I hope this will be a steady Principle with thee and me, and all honest Men, which neither the Devil, the World, nor the Flesh, shall ever be able to shake. *Amen.*

Paris, \*\*\*\*\*

\* History of *China*, Tom. II. Pag. 224.



*The End of the* FIRST VOLUME.

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## ERRATA.

**P**AGE, 4, 5, 6, 12, 17, 20, 22, 25, 27, 34, 35, for *Nazarites* and *Nazarite*, read *Nazarenes* and *Nazarene*. P. 10, l. 15, r. *notwithstanding all*. P. 16, l. 8, r. *Ramadan*. P. 26, l. 6, r. *notwithstanding the*. P. 45, l. 15, 21, r. *Chapel*. P. 50, l. ult. r. *Dervishes*. P. 54, l. 22, r. *Nazarenism*. P. 57, l. 21, r. *Nazarenism*. P. 62, l. 27, r. *Dervish*. P. 91, l. 21, 28, r. *Julian*. P. 92, l. 4, r. *Julian*. P. 96, l. ult. r. *convinced*. P. 106, l. 5, r. *Eunomians*. P. 200, l. 6, r. *in Nazarenism*. P. 200, l. 22, r. *Superficies*. P. 255, l. 19, r. *of his Love*. P. 260, l. 7, r. *fifty*. P. 326, l. 14 r. *Rabbinist*. P. 346, l. 7, instead of *but he alone*, r. *and*. P. 285, l. 9, for *and more*, r. *and as*. P. 352, l. 25, for *Breath*, r. *Breadth*.





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